



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

BV 4501

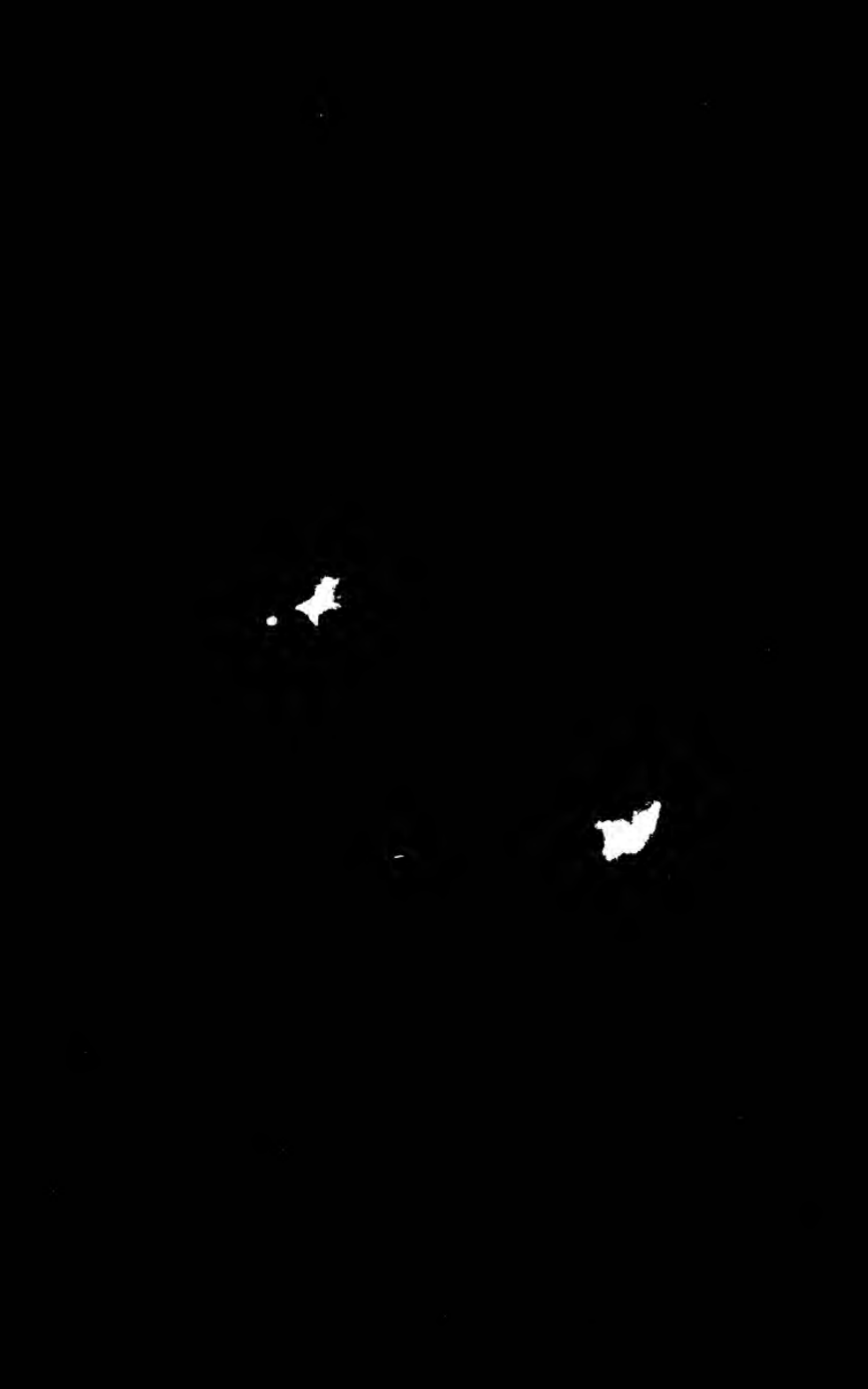
Class.

Copyright No.

Shelf

P 63

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





THE
CHRISTIAN.

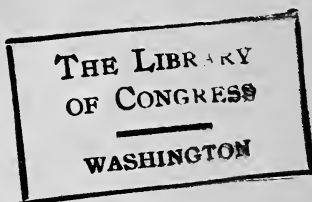
BY
W. C. M.
WILLIAM S. PLUMER, D.D.



PHILADELPHIA:
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.
1878.

BV4501
P63

Copyright, 1878, by
WILLIAM S. PLUMER.



C O N T E N T S.

THE CHRISTIAN NAME, - - - - -	5
THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION, - - - - -	9
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, - - - - -	13
THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE, - - - - -	17
THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER—AN EXAMPLE, - -	21
THE CHRISTIAN'S SIMPLICITY, - - - - -	28
THE CHRISTIAN'S WAY, - - - - -	32
THE CHRISTIAN'S TEMPTATIONS, - - - - -	37
THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER TEMPTATIONS, -	41
THE CHRISTIAN'S VIEWS OF SIN, - - - - -	44
THE CHRISTIAN'S BESETTING SINS, - - - - -	50
THE CHRISTIAN'S SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, -	54
THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH, - - - - -	57
WHY DO I REST CONFIDENTLY IN CHRIST? - -	61
THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE, - - - - -	67
THE CHRISTIAN'S TRUST, - - - - -	72
A CHRISTIAN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS, - - - - -	76
THE CHRISTIAN LIVES BY RULE, - - - - -	81

THE CHRISTIAN'S ENEMIES, - - - - -	85
THE CHRISTIAN'S SHEPHERD, - - - - -	89
THE CHRISTIAN'S ADVOCATE, - - - - -	92
THE CHRISTIAN'S EARNEST, - - - - -	96
THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY, - - - - -	100
THE CHRISTIAN'S SORROW, - - - - -	104
THE CHRISTIAN'S SORROW—MORE ABOUT IT, - - -	110
THE CHRISTIAN'S HATRED OF ERROR, - - - -	113
THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORIOUS RICHES, - - - -	117
SOME MUSINGS OF AN OLD CHRISTIAN, - - -	120
LETTER TO AN AGED CHRISTIAN, - - - -	123
DEATH OF AN OLD DISCIPLE, - - - - -	129
A GREAT AND GOOD MAN, - - - - -	132
ANOTHER GREAT AND GOOD MAN, - - - -	137
WHAT CAN I DO? - - - - -	141
POSTHUMOUS USEFULNESS, - - - - -	144

THE CHRISTIAN.

THE CHRISTIAN NAME.

The word Christian is found but three times in all the Scriptures. The places where it occurs are Acts xi. 26; Acts xxvi. 28; and 1 Peter iv. 16. These read as follows: "And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

The chronology of some of the events recorded in the Acts is not entirely certain, but it seems pretty clear that the followers of our Lord were not called Christians till ten or twelve years after our Saviour's ascension to heaven.

I once heard a sermon on Acts xi. 26, in which it was assumed that the name Christian, like that of Puritan or Methodist, was first given in reproach, and by enemies; and was afterward adopted by the disciples of our Lord, as a name which they were willing to bear. And it can not be denied that in every age odious epithets have been heaped upon the godly. It is also certain from the history of the trial and martyrdom of Polycarp, that for a long time the enemies

of the Cross employed the term to revile and accuse. But this does not prove that bad men first gave the name.

These things seem to be clear :

1. Christian is a very fit name for all the followers of Christ. They are in Christ. They love and adore Christ. They are ready to die for Christ. He is their Saviour and Redeemer. They are not ashamed of Him, and He is not ashamed of them. They are the friends, followers, and redeemed of Jesus Christ. He is all in all to them. They are precious to Him. He says so, Isa. xliii. 4.

2. Christian is a very convenient name. It well designates God's people, and in itself sums up the whole matter. Other names are given to God's people, and some of them are very appropriate, but none is more fitting than this.

3. It was foretold by the evangelical prophet that in the latter days the Church should receive a new appellation : "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory : and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name."—Isa. lxii. 2. This passage no doubt indicates the great blessing arising from the altered state and prospects of the Gospel Church. But may it not also be interpreted as having been literally fulfilled in the bestowment of the name Christian? Many have so thought.

4. Nor were there wanting in the primitive Church persons by whom the Lord could fitly change the name of His people ; for in immediate connection with the historic statement that "the disciples were

called Christians first at Antioch," it is added, "And in these days came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch. And there stood up one of them, named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world; which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar."—Acts xi. 26–28. There were inspired men who were able to make known the mind of God and to speak by His authority.

5. The people of God have ever since, and without hesitation, borne the name of Christians. The inspired historian, Luke, says nothing against it. Peter speaks of it approvingly. Evidently good men have long accepted it as if it were from the Lord.

Some one may ask, WHAT IS IN A NAME? The answer is, that there is a great deal in a name; and in giving a name, one exercises high authority. It is recorded as one of the acts of the intelligence and authority of Adam that he gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field.—Gen. ii. 20. Jehovah himself asserts His prerogative in giving and changing names as He pleases. Thus He changed the names of Abraham, Jacob, and Sarah. Thus He directed that the name of His incarnate Son should be called Jesus. Names are things when properly applied. They are indeed often borne unworthily, often misapplied. But it would shock our pious feelings if the ancient Church had received her names from Cain, or Canaan, or Korah, or any notoriously bad man, instead of being called Jacob, Israel, Joseph, Abraham's seed, and spoken of in other like terms indicative of glory and virtue.

In the Christian name is so much that is precious, that nothing could persuade good men to give it up. Even bad men love to have the epithet Christian bestowed upon their loved ones who have left the world.

Reader, are you a Christian; a real, living, firm, consistent Christian? You have the name, but are you worthy of it? Is your union with Christ close and vital? Do you live in Him? Do you live for Him? Do you live to Him? Do you wish to live and reign with Him? Have you duly considered the import of the name you bear? It means much more than being born in a Christian land. Worthily to bear the name of a Christian, is the greatest honor and the greatest happiness ever attained on earth.

Christian is the highest style of man.

THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION.

In the New Testament the same Greek verb is rendered both confess and profess. In these places it is rendered confess, viz.: Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8; John i. 20, ix. 22, xii. 42; Acts xxiii. 8, xxiv. 14; Rom. x. 9; Heb. xi. 13; 1 John i. 9, iv. 2, 3, 15; and 2 John 7. In the following places the same verb is rendered profess, viz.: Matt. vii. 23; 1 Tim. vi. 12; Titus i. 16. In like manner the cognate noun is sometimes rendered profession, as in 1 Tim. vi. 12; and in the very next verse it is rendered confession.

If there is any difference between a confession and a profession, it is that the former is made in the face of danger, while the latter is a mere setting forth of our belief and practice. Each is an avowal of one's convictions or of one's belief. Each is a declaration of what is supposed to be truth.

A Christian profession is called for—

1. By the very nature of the case, Christ's kingdom is both spiritual and voluntary. If men consent not to serve Him, they are His enemies. If they bow to His yoke, how can they more fitly declare that fact than by avowing their love to Him? If none of Christ's friends declare for Him, He will soon have no friends in this world.

2. A proper and becoming profession of love to Christ is useful to others. It emboldens timid disci-

ples. It confirms the faltering. It awakens the dull and inattentive. It makes men feel that there is a reality in religion. Very few things are more potent for good than a solemn profession of Christ's religion. Many a man has been stout and hardened till he saw his wife, or child, or brother, standing up to take upon them the vows of God. It was proof of desperate wickedness in the chief priests and elders that when even the publicans and harlots believed John, and these officials saw it, they repented not afterward that they might believe.—Matt. xxi. 32.

3. A Christian profession is commended in the Word of God. It is called "a good profession."—1 Tim. vi. 12. It is in itself right, comely, beautiful, excellent, as the Greek word signifies.

4. A Christian profession is commanded by Him who has all authority in the case. His word and providence unite in saying: Who is on the Lord's side? Come out from among them. Be ye separate, saith the Lord. Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

5. Very glorious promises are annexed to a right Christian profession, and very awful threatenings are uttered against those who refuse to own the Redeemer. Hear the Saviour, who shall be our final Judge: "Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven."—Matt. x. 32, 33. Compare Luke xii. 8, 9; Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26; Rom. x. 9, 10.

But what is implied in a Christian profession? It

is plainly to own the whole truth of God as made known to us. To profess any error or falsehood can not but be dishonoring to God. A good profession clearly implies an adherence to the truth of God. And no lie is of the truth. It is also a declaration of a purpose to observe all God's statutes and ordinances. There is no piety where there is no keeping of the Commandments. A good profession is always followed by walking in the ways of the Lord, following His example, and framing our doings to please Him and serve His people. And all this is with humble subjection to Christ in all things.

A Christian profession must be—

1. Sincere and hearty. Not only must it not be basely hypocritical, but in it there must not be even self-deception. It must be honestly made. In it must be no reserves, no relentings. A profession of love without love is offensive to every right mind.

2. It must be humble, not vain-glorious and ostentatious. Jehu called on men to witness his zeal for the Lord of hosts. He was a poor, vain creature.

3. A Christian profession must be open and public. Christ made no secret of His love to us. Why should we make a secret of our love to Him? "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—Matt. v. 16.

4. Our profession should also be bold and fearless. We should not seem to be asking pardon for being followers of Jesus Christ. Paul says: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

—Rom. i. 16. There is an apologetic way of avowing truth which seems to provoke opposition. We must stand up for Jesus, cost what it may. The life of the truth is more important than the life of any man upon earth. We must resist even unto the shedding of blood, if necessary.

5. A Christian profession is until death. In this war there is no discharge. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him," says God.—Heb. x. 38.

In this work we have great encouragement. "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised."—Heb. x. 23. How faithful He is the saints of all ages can testify. His faithfulness never fails. It reaches to the heavens. It is unto all generations.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

When we speak of the Christian life, we may refer either to the gracious principle implanted in the heart of the regenerate, or to the ordinary methods of its manifestation. Let us look at both.

The life of God in the soul of a believer is a great mystery. In any case life is somewhat unknown to us. But the life of a child of God is very far removed from the ken of the careless. Believers themselves are God's hidden ones. They are fed and nourished by the hidden manna. The secret of the Lord is with them. He shows them His covenant. Their life is hid with Christ in God. True, when Christ, who is their life, shall appear, then shall they also appear with Him in glory. But now they are unknown to the world, except as their light shines in the darkness.

The Christian life is supernatural. It is something far above the powers of the carnal man. That the blind should see, the deaf hear, the lame man leap as an hart, and the dead live, can be accounted for only on the ground that it is the work of God. We are all dead in trespasses and sins, until Divine grace makes us new creatures. Over our understanding, dense clouds of smoke and thick darkness from the bottomless pit have settled. We have eyes, but we see not. Our imaginations are vain. Our memories

are polluted. Our ingenuity devises mischief and foolish evasions and excuses. Our wills are perverse and stubborn. Our daring in sin is frightful. To think of our state might well make one to shudder. Our enmity to God is mortal. If such are changed from hatred to love, from sin to holiness, it must be by God's power, His mighty power.

This Christian life is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and no man knows the way of the Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." It is but vanity and presumption for us poor worms to claim to comprehend the ways of God.

The Christian life is to the soul that experiences it a new life. Old things have passed away. All things are become new. Like all new life, it is full of wonders. Everything pertaining to it is fresh and suited to rejoice the heart.

And so it is a happy life. The joy of the Lord has great strength in it. The buoyancy of the soul that is stayed on God is often wonderful—always mighty.

This life is also abiding. It is not always equally strong, but it is fed by new supplies of strength until the last.

Of course the Christian life is a great mercy. So says the apostle of the circumcision: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope," etc. So says the apostle of the Gentiles: "God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we

were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ," etc.

The Christian life manifests itself—

1. By healthful and regular pulsations. The child of God has a heart, and its throbbings are not spasmodic and occasional. Because Christ lives in them, the life of Christians is constant.

2. The Christian life manifests itself by cries—cries that enter the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. As soon as Paul was renewed, it was said of him, "Behold, he prayeth." No Christian lives without prayer.

3. The Christian life manifests itself by a relish for suitable food. Even the new-born babe desires the sincere milk of the Word that it may grow thereby. After awhile the strong meat of God's Word is required, and it is relished also.

4. Wondrously, too, does the child of grace enjoy the pure and heavenly atmosphere of the Church and ordinances of God's house, and the sweet moments of the communion of saints in prayer and praise, in supplication and thanksgiving.

5. Such Christians will grow—will grow up into more and more stability, heavenly-mindedness, constancy, courage, love, faith, and hope. Of some, Paul says their faith grew exceedingly.

6. The Christian life will show itself by activity. There will sooner or later be motion where there is life. In due time the renewed man will walk, and leap, and praise God. When one said to an ancient philosopher, "There is no such thing as motion," the sage said not a word, but arose and walked across the room. That was answer enough. So if any say

there is no Christian life in the world, let us, by walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly, prove that they are mistaken.

There is a reality, there is a power in heartfelt piety. On this earth nothing is more powerful. But for it the world would soon come to an end—the cries of its wickedness perpetually calling for vengeance. But as ten righteous men would have saved the cities of the plain, so for the elect's sakes the day of vengeance is shortened and the day of grace prolonged.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

The word doctrine is found more than fifty times in the Scriptures. It has various shades of meaning, but it commonly has the idea of knowledge, instruction, tenet. Our present business is with Christian doctrine.

The prophets, Christ, and His Apostles did teach something coherent and harmonious. There is a system of truth. It differs from Paganism, Mohammedanism, Deism, Judaism. Christian doctrine embraces the truths of the Gospel. In general it consists in the instruction given us in all God's Word. In particular it is made up of those great principles urged by Christ and His Apostles as expository of the Old Testament, and as declaring the mind and will of God.

There is such a thing as Christian doctrine in opposition to anti-Christian error. Truth is opposed to falsehood. Both Solomon and Paul speak of "good doctrine." Four times does Paul speak of "sound doctrine," which is the same as good doctrine. All true and sound doctrine is good whether it pleases or offends men. In Scripture it is called "the doctrine of God," "the doctrine of the Lord," "the doctrine of God our Saviour," "the doctrine of Jesus," "the doctrine of Christ," "the doctrine of the Apostles," "the doctrine which is according to godliness." In Scripture it is synonymous with "truth,"

"the truth in Christ," "the truth as it is in Jesus," "the truth of God," and "the word of truth." It is elsewhere called the "form of sound words," and "sound speech that can not be condemned."

Christian doctrine is just the opposite of what the Bible calls "strange doctrines," "the doctrines and commandments of men," "philosophy and vain deceit," "the doctrines of devils," "the traditions of men," "damnable heresies."

So that it can not be denied that there is such a thing as sound doctrine, just as there is unsound doctrine; there is *good* doctrine, and there is evil doctrine; there is doctrine according to godliness, and there is doctrine contrary to piety; there is a word that nourishes men up in faith, and there is a word that doth eat as a canker. Christian doctrine is always good, safe, edifying.

We are bound to discriminate between Christian doctrine and all its opposites. The Word of God requires us to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good; to try the spirits, and not to believe every spirit; to judge of religious teachers by their doctrines. This can be done. Many have done it. We can know the truth. "The doctrine of the Pharisees" and "the doctrine of the Sadducees" never did accord with the doctrine of Christ. "The doctrine of Balaam" and "the doctrine of the Nicolaitans" always were at war with truth and righteousness, always were abhorred by good men, and always did subvert those who lent a willing ear to them. Light and darkness are not more opposite than truth and error. Arsenic and flour look very much alike;

but one kills while the other nourishes. All are bound to distinguish between Christian doctrine and opposing errors.

Christian doctrine is not the product of earth. Man is not its author. All saving truth is heaven-born. Christ so taught: "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." The suffrage of all men can not transmute a lie or a fable into the truth. Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. If God says anything, it is true. If He says it not, it is either not true, or it concerns not our salvation.

Christian doctrine must be known, loved, and embraced. It is essential to right views of God's nature, government, and worship. Before one believes that he needs a Saviour, he must believe that he is a sinner. Men never reject the truth but from pride, or prejudice, or the want of right affections. The Scripture warrants us in saying that men hold false doctrine because they have "not received the love of the truth," and that proves a vicious state of mind. All but bad men love the truth.

Our salvation depends upon our receiving the Christian verity. "He that believeth not is condemned already." "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." These are a few specimens of what God's Word says, to teach us how essential a hearty reception of the very doctrines of Scripture is to our securing eternal life. Error may lead to bigotry, blasphemy, or superstition, but never to holiness.

False doctrine dishonors God at every step. It defiles the conscience, corrupts the heart, blinds the mind, and makes vain our imaginations. On the other hand, truth is in order to godliness. When inspired men would stir up God's people to courage, constancy, humility, benevolence, adoration, and holiness, they never present old wives' fables, but the great truths of Scripture. Nor are God's friends at liberty to hold back the truth that the rejection of some of the doctrines of God will bring utter ruin on the soul. To believe a lie in religion is a very alarming symptom. "If an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—Gal. i. 8.

We must not only hold the Christian doctrine, but we must hold it to the rejection of opposing errors. The Pharisees held considerable truth, but they made it all vain by their traditions.

And we must hold the Christian doctrine at all cost and at all hazards. "Buy the truth, and sell it not." Myriads have laid down their lives for the testimony of Jesus; and they acted wisely in so doing. By thus losing their lives, they made sure eternal life. It would not be difficult to show that all the truths of religion, and all the civil and religious liberty on earth, are the fruit of the sufferings of men, who hazarded their lives for Christian doctrine.

THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER—AN EXAMPLE.

The word character is often taken in the sense of reputation ; but when used more precisely, it refers to the principles and affections which control a man. It is the stamp on the mind, the impress on the heart, the sum of the effects produced on the soul by all the influences brought to bear upon it.

There is such a thing as Christian character. Otherwise there is no difference between good men and bad men. Much as some wish such an opinion to prevail, it has no evidence to support it. Under sore trials good men have been sometimes tempted to adopt it, pronouncing all men deceivers ; but it has never been the settled judgment of any man. Every one has evidence to the contrary. Even infidels have confessed the difference between Christian servants and the profane in their employment.

The epithets bestowed on men in the Word of God clearly show that there is a radical difference between them. Some are called wise, and others foolish ; some are just, and others unjust ; some are righteous, and others unrighteous ; some are godly, and others ungodly ; some are the friends of God, and others are His enemies ; some are the servants of God, and others are the servants of sin ; some are the children of God, and others are the children of the Devil. Christians are strangers and pilgrims, and others are

men of the world. There is a radical difference between men's characters. The Bible says so. All this is very reasonable, for—

1. God's grace has done much more for some men than for others. See what a difference it made between Paul and Nero, both bloody persecutors; between Zaccheus and the young ruler whom Jesus loved, both greedy worldlings; between the two thieves on the Cross, both deserving death for their crimes. Every Christian has received of the Lord pardon for all his sins, acceptance in the Beloved, the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. He has also been renewed in the spirit of his mind by the power of the Holy Ghost. He has received a new heart. The law of God has been written upon his heart. He has been made a new creature. It would be monstrous for such a one to be, to live, and to act like one who had never been thus blessed.

2. The Christian has seen more than the wicked. He has had his eyes opened to behold wondrous things out of God's law. Christ has been revealed in him, and to him. He has by faith seen Him, who is invisible. He has caught amazing glimpses of the glorious character of the incorruptible God. How can such a one be, live, or behave like the poor, blinded sinner, who can not see afar off?

3. The Christian has heard more than the wicked. His ears have been circumcised. He has so heard that he has lived. Like Lazarus in the grave, he has heard the Son of God saying, "Come forth," and he has had strength to obey. He has heard the voice of

Love saying, "He that believeth shall be saved." He has heard the tender calls of bleeding mercy. Surely such a man will be different from those who are strangers to such things.

4. The Christian has felt more than the sinner. His heart has been circumcised. His soul has been filled with pleasure at things which the wicked care not for. Many a time his heart has burned within him at things which never moved the wicked. The Lord has opened his heart to attend unto the things which concern salvation. In his heart he thinks far differently from what he ever thought before.

5. The Christian has sincerely and devoutly promised to live unto God, and not unto himself. The vows of God are upon him. He has sworn that he would keep the statutes of the Lord. The man of the world has never heartily made any such engagements. Whatever promises he has made, if not grossly hypocritical, were at least without any gracious purpose to glorify God. Ease soon revokes vows made under terrors of conscience, the pangs of affliction, or the apprehension of death. It would be marvelous if the Christian, with all his good intentions, solemn vows, and settled purposes, had not a character quite decided and vastly different from that of the sinner. He may be slow to engage in some good things, but his hand once put to the plow, he looks not back.

6. The Christian really and earnestly expects more and greater things than all the sinners in the world. They have transient and vain expectations, based on

their own self-righteousness, and on mistaken views of the character of God. But the Christian is warranted in every hope he indulges, built upon the Word of God. All his expectations are awakened by truth and the spirit of truth. None of his hopes shall perish. His supports in future conflicts and in the last struggle shall be greater than he had been able to think. The crown of life shall be more glorious than he ever anticipated. It therefore can not be otherwise than that he shall be a peculiar manner of person in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God. He perfects holiness in the fear of God. He lives soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world. His character is different from that of all the enemies of God. The wicked take knowledge of him that he has been with Jesus. His brethren in the Lord are drawn to him. He lives before God. His very death is precious in the sight of the Lord.

AN EXAMPLE IN REV. WM. PRESTON, D.D.

About the beginning of this century there was born in Connecticut a child, which grew and waxed strong, and in due time reached a vigorous manhood. After careful preparation he was inducted into the sacred office. His ecclesiastical relations were with the Protestant Episcopal Church. He twice served the Master as pastor of the flock in Columbus, Ohio, and twice, and for a longer period, he labored in Pittsburgh, Pa. In this latter field he spent in all about thirty of the best years of his life. Like many

other people of God whom I have known, he left this world on Sabbath morning. It was the 25th of April. When the churches he had served, and the thousands of Israel were assembling in houses built with hands, he was for the first time joining in the hallelujahs of the temple on high. When Christian and Hopeful entered the heavenly city, Bunyan says: "Then I heard in my dream that all the bells in the city rang again for joy, and that it was said unto them, 'Enter ye into the joy of your Lord.'"

The day of his death was the greatest Sabbath ever enjoyed by Dr. Preston. To all such as he the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth. He entered this world with a cry as of distress. He entered heaven with a shout of "Salvation unto God and the Lamb." Here he had tears and sorrows, known to his Saviour and himself; but in the Church above he shall sorrow no more, for there the Lord God wipes away all tears from off all faces.

Dr. Preston was a lovely man. He was naturally amiable, and grace had sweetened all his nature. Who ever heard him say a hard or harsh thing of a fellow-creature? He loved God's people of every name. His soul was warmed with a charity that hoped and believed and endured all that good men are commonly called to hope and believe and endure. Neither by nature, nor in principle, nor in practice was Dr. Preston a bigot. He abhorred those narrow views and feelings which believed moral excellence was found chiefly in his own denomination. Often did he walk to the house of God in company with brethren of other churches, and mingle his voice with theirs

in prayer and in praise. I have never heard more tender or evangelical extemporaneous prayers in large assemblies than I have heard from him, when he was the only Episcopalian perhaps in all the congregation.

Dr. Preston greatly loved the doctrines of grace. He was a firm believer in those doctrines as taught by Paul, by Augustine, by Calvin, and by the best English reformers. On these subjects his trumpet gave no uncertain sound. His faith was grounded and settled. He never attempted nor pretended to make any new discoveries in theology. He took good heed to the Word of the Lord as given by the prophet Jeremiah, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

One truly says of him: "The ministers and Christian people of this city, indeed the whole community, mourn the death of a devoted servant of Christ, a pastor of stainless reputation, and a warm-hearted gentleman and Christian friend." This witness is true.

The friendship between Dr. Preston and myself was of more than twenty years' standing. I found him always as kind as a woman, as firm as a rock, as fearless as a lion, and as true as steel. We had often communed together of the things of the kingdom. I never heard from him a doubtful sentiment. I never knew him to quail under clamor. He was valiant for the truth. He hated every false way. "I am distressed for thee, my brother; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."

The death of such men as Dr. Preston has a real power in making us willing to die. The society of which he is now a member is composed of the *élite* of the universe. Every choice spirit that has passed away from earth belongs to that blessed company who worship before the throne in a world where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SIMPLICITY.

In our English Bible and in common parlance, to be simple is often the same as to be stupid, silly, credulous, easily deceived by appearances. In this case it is the opposite of sagacious. Thus: "A prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished."—Prov. xxii. 3. "Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart" (Hos. vii. 11), describes a like character. It is a bad thing to be a natural fool. It is worse to be made a fool by vicious men and vicious inclinations. Such simplicity is never commended. This is the worst kind of simplicity, because it is both the fruit and the cause of wickedness.

Sometimes a simple man is one who is weak, uninstructed, perhaps deceived, but honest, a seeker of truth. Thus to the great feast prepared by wisdom the invitation is sent forth: "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither."—Prov. ix. 4.

One of the words rendered simplicity often denotes health, soundness, freedom from disease. Thus a single eye is a good eye, giving clear vision.—Matt. vi. 22; Luke xi. 34. The cognate noun is rendered singleness of heart in Eph. vi. 5 and Col. iii. 22, where it means soundness or integrity of heart.

Again, simplicity is the opposite of penuriousness, stinginess, and so implies goodness, gentleness, liber-

ality. Thus, in Rom. xii. 8, "He that giveth [let him do it] with simplicity." In 2 Cor. viii. 2 the same word is rendered liberality, and in 2 Cor. ix. 11, bountifulness.

Lastly, to be simple is to be inoffensive, free from bad intention, inexpert in wickedness, harmless, as where Paul says, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil."—Rom. xvi. 19. The same word is used by our Lord when He says, "Be ye wise as serpents and harmless as doves;" and by Paul, when he says, "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke." What is it, then, to be simple concerning evil? It is something wholly consistent with being wise unto that which is good. It is not natural foolishness. Yet to carnal men it often looks like folly, because it readily incurs natural evils rather than run into sinful ways. The arts of wicked men are not known to such. They are "so wise as not to be deceived, and yet so simple as not to be deceivers." In malice they are children, in understanding they are men. It is no credit to any good man to be an adept in the arts and chicanery of the deceitful world. It was by one of the ancients pronounced a reproach to a king or philosopher to dance well. So it is a shame for a Christian to be expert in the devices of carnal men for gaining influence and promoting selfish or base designs.

The simplicity of the Gospel is near of kin to godly sincerity.—2 Cor. i. 12. It abhors duplicity. It carries its heart in its hand. It has no crooked ways.

“It is fair, it is candid, it is honest, it is upright in all things.”

And it is as loving as it is fair. It bears no malice. Its tongue is not defiled with slander, nor its hands with wrong. Its steps are not stained with blood. It curses not, but it blesses largely. It is manly, not mean. It is humble, but not servile. It is bold, but not fierce. It devises liberal things, but loves to do good unseen. It is not boastful nor ostentatious, and yet it refuses not to do good for fear it should be found out.

Call on one possessed of this excellent quality to deny himself, and nothing seems easier. Present to him the temptations which master most men and they seem powerless. Their chief effect is to drive him nearer to God, closer to the mercy-seat, quite into the bosom of the Good Shepherd. This quality is gracious. It should be cultivated. It may be much strengthened by prayer, by the Word of God, by practice, by hating every false way, by associating with men of pure minds and simple hearts. In nothing is example more potent than in learning lessons of simplicity.

Because great attainments in this excellence are not often made, we ought the more earnestly to labor and pray for it. The more we are tempted to any course inconsistent with this simplicity, the more should we resist the devil, that he may flee from us.

For a pattern we have One that excels all others—our Lord Jesus Christ. Often He declined to commit Himself to others, for He knew what was in man. But never did any put themselves in His power or under His control, but to be blessed thereby. When

He gave, it was with all bountifulness. When He reproved, it was with all gentleness. When He invited, it was with superhuman kindness. His eye was single. His heart was single and sincere and loving. His mind was pure and upright. Oh, be like Jesus Christ !

THE CHRISTIAN'S WAY.

Every man has his way. Conduct is an index to character. Manners make the man. Behavior before God and man tells where one is going.

The way of sinners is evil, is false, is hard, is wicked, is dangerous, is ruinous. It leads to hell. It leads nowhere else. In the end it will cause the bitterest lamentations ever heard. There is no madness equal to that of sinning against God.

But the Christian has his way too. Indeed, believers are more than once called men of the way. In Acts ix. 2, we translate it "any of this way." But scholars know that it should be any of *the* way. So also in Acts xix. 9, it is said some "spake evil of that way." It means they spoke evil of the way, that is, the way of God, the way of good men. In the Old Testament the word *way* sometimes has the same general import.

In an important sense Christ himself is the way of believers. So He teaches: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—John xiv. 6. The soul enters on its upward and glorious career through Christ alone.—John x. 1, 7. In the same manner it continues its heavenly course. As men have received Christ the Lord, so do they walk in Him. Paul's great wish was that he might be "found in Christ." The same

is true of all who are clearly on their way to glory and honor.

The Christian's way is the way of truth. Inspired men so call it—2 Pet. ii. 2. It is the true way. There is no mistake in it. It deceives no one. It disappoints no one. It is not built on fables and fictions. It is built on truth, more lasting than the mountains.

There is no foolishness in it. It is wise. It is often called the way of understanding. No man acts wisely till he walks in it. No man has any wisdom above this. To forsake this way is to choose death.

The Christian's path is the way of righteousness.—2 Peter ii. 21. It is the way of justifying righteousness. Only thus is any man pardoned. Only thus is any man accepted as righteous. It is the way of personal righteousness. It is the good and the right way.—1 Sam. xii. 23. It is the way of holiness. So the evangelical prophet spoke of it: "An highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."—Isa. xxxv. 8.

No marvel, then, that the course of the Christian is called the way of God (Acts xviii. 26); and the way of the Lord.—Ps. xxvii. 11. It is the way God chooses, appoints, and loves. He honors it with His presence and His smiles. He who walks in it, walks with God. God is his friend, his guide, his shepherd, his father, his exceeding joy.

No wonder, then, that Zacharias, when filled with the Holy Ghost, called it the way of peace.—Luke i.

79. It brings peace to the heart and the conscience. It secures peace with God, and leads to peace with just men. It inspires pure and friendly sentiments to all.

It is also the way of life, and of salvation.—Prov. vi. 23; xv. 24; Jer. xxi. 8; Acts xvi. 17. All who walk not in this way are dead in trespasses and in sins. They are out of the right way. They are stalking to ruin. But they who are in this way shall, in the highest sense, live. They belong to Christ. Because He lives, they shall live also. They are even here delivered from the curse and displeasure of God. In the best and highest sense of the term, they have salvation.

This way is strait, narrow, difficult.—Matt. vii. 14. Men can not walk in it carelessly. They can not carry with them their vices and lusts. They must learn and practice the laws of self-denial. They must not be restive. They must not rebel under powerful restraints. The righteous are scarcely saved.

This way is also straight. It is not crooked. Sin is always tortuous. But a good man hates every false way. He is not double-tongued, nor double-minded. He means what he says, and he says what he means. He speaks the truth in his heart. He walks in uprightness.

This is also a living way.—Heb. x. 20. It is not dead and dull; but lively, and full of animation. It inspires the best hopes, on the most solid grounds.

Though in a sense it is difficult, requiring the utmost care and sobriety, yet it is pleasant.—Prov. iii. 17. By Divine grace it is made easy. It is the way

of transgressors that is hard. They are under cruel bondage. But the righteous serve a good Master. He carries the heavy end of every cross. His yoke is easy, and His burden light.

The way of the Christian is often hidden. His resources are secret, and his motives are not seen. His heart is the best part of him. If he could have his way, he would be done with sin and temptation forever. Often obloquy, prejudice, poverty, or tribulation covers him, and he is like a dead man out of sight. Yet his way is not hidden from the Lord, nor his judgment passed over from his God. In due time Jehovah will bring forth His righteousness as the light, and His judgment as the noonday.

This way is also plain. An honest heart under Divine teaching never misses it. God reveals its glorious mysteries to babes and sucklings. Simple folk with honest hearts are sure to find the truth.

This is no new way. This path has been trodden by the saints of all ages. In it were found Abel, and Enoch, and Job, and Daniel, and Paul, and John, and all the martyrs and confessors. One of the sins and follies of every age, is an attempt to show, or to find some new way. But God reproves such a spirit. Hear Him: "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."—Jer. vi. 16.

The way of the saints is one, and not many. No one need perplex himself on account of seeming diversities. For there are not many ways of salvation. In the very place where God promises one

heart to His people, He also promises them one way.—Jer. xxxii. 39.

The whole way of the Christian is marked out in God's Word, and is called the way of His precepts, the way of His commandments, the way of His statutes, the way of His judgments.—Ps. cxix. 27, 32, 33; Isa. xxvi. 8. Sad indeed is the case of those whose fear toward God is taught by the precepts of men.—Isa. xxix. 13.

The way of the Christian often seems long, but let him not repine. Life's toils and sorrows will soon be over—over forever.

The way of good men habitually increases in radiance. It shineth more and more unto the perfect day.—Prov. iv. 18. The reason is, it is the only perfect way.—Ps. ci. 2. This is the course which the Psalmist calls the way everlasting. It shall not be broken up.

THE CHRISTIAN'S TEMPTATIONS.

The words *tempt* and *temptation* have in Scripture different meanings according to the connection in which they are found.

1. When it is said God did tempt Abraham (Gen. xxii. 1), the meaning is that God did try and prove Abraham. He has and He exercises His right thus to evince the real principles of His creatures. He subjected angels to probation. God does not thus seek to inform Himself, for He knows men perfectly; but He thus shows to His people, and even to His foes, the power of holy principles in the heart.—Job i. 8; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7. In Scripture, saints are called upon to count it all joy when they fall into such temptations.—James i. 2, 3. God can and will carry His servants through such trials, and thus strengthen their good habits and principles. They shall come out as gold.—Job xxiii. 10.

2. Men are said to tempt, try, or prove God when they unbelievably call upon Him to manifest His presence, power, or kindness. This is a freak of wicked caprice. In this sense the Israelites tempted, proved, and provoked God in the desert.—Ex. xvii. 2-7; Ps. xcv. 8, 9; Heb. iii. 9. When God is doing for us all we really need, we have no right to call upon Him to do more; nor may we prescribe to Him when or how He shall deliver us. Men also tempt

God when they presume on a miraculous preservation, and rush unbidden into dangers.—Matt. iv. 6, 7. They also tempt Him, that is, they unwarrantably prove Him, when, casting His cords asunder, they sin without stint, as if to see whether He will punish them or bring on them threatened evils.—Mal. iii. 15.

3. Satan tempts men, and men tempt one another, by endeavoring to seduce them from truth, from right, from piety to error, pride, or wickedness. In this sense God tempts no man.—James i. 13. God abhors iniquity. He seduces no one, and is seduced by no one.

4. Sometimes temptation means a successful seduction. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."—James i. 14. Thus men are tempted, when in them there is somewhat congenial to the seduction, and they yield to it.

In no sense are good men compelled to sin. God always provides a way of escape. That way may be through a burning fiery furnace, through a lion's den, through a shower of stones, through death itself; but it is still a way of escape. It is not wicked to die. In his design to prove Job a hypocrite, Satan was entirely baffled. In his attempt to bring to naught the work of redemption, he wholly failed. The Son of God was more than a match for him. The three great means of preserving us from falling under the power of any temptation are these:

1. A deep sense of our own weakness. No part of the Lord's Prayer suits our case better than this: "Lead us not into temptation." The meaning is, Let us not be tried beyond our strength, and when tried,

let us not fall into the snare of the wicked one. Blessed is the man that feareth always. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. Consider thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

2. It is a great thing to have the Word of God ready for every occasion. In sophistry the enemy often exceeds our power of reasoning; but the Word of God is too keen for him. When tempted, our Saviour did not moralize or philosophize on the matter. He simply quoted Scripture, saying: "It is written, it is written, it is written."

3. Watchfulness and prayer must be constantly used. I unite them because the Scripture unites them, and because, when genuine and holy, they are never separated. Our Lord said: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Compare Matt. xxvi. 41; Mark xiii. 33, xiv. 38; Col. iv. 2.

The great deliverer from temptation is God himself.—2 Pet. ii. 9. The apostle says: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations." This is as if he had said, God's resources are infinite. He is never at a loss for wisdom, love, or power. He has often and marvelously rescued His saints. He never fails when He undertakes their cause.

To the tempted people of God the sympathy and intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ are held forth for their encouragement. "In that He himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." "We have not an high-priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we

are, yet without sin." "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." No wonder the saints triumph. Their Lord triumphed before them. By Him they can do all things. He is mighty to save.

Are these things so? Then let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Let us be of good courage. Distrust is a great foe to peace and victory. Omnipotence never labors, and is never baffled.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VICTORY OVER TEMPTATIONS.

It almost startles one to hear the apostle James saying, "My brethren, count it all joy [regard it as matter of very great joy] when ye fall into divers temptations. . . . Blessed is the man that endureth [patiently endures, with constancy bears up under] temptation." But when we search God's Word, we find the doctrine abundantly supported and illustrated.

Take the case of our Blessed Lord. He was long and sorely tempted of the devil—tempted as no man ever was. Yet see the happy consequences immediately following: "Behold, angels came and ministered unto Him." While His temptation lasted, they stood at a distance to let it appear that Christ could conquer by His own power and holiness. But when the battle was fought and the victory won, they rejoiced in such a Lord; they brought Him food; they comforted Him, as they often strengthen and comfort His tempted people. If Satan was allowed to assail Him, angels were sent to congratulate Him, adore Him, and serve Him. Thus, He was prepared and encouraged to go boldly on in His great work of destroying the works of the devil and in setting up the kingdom of God.

A like result is reached when the saints endure temptation. The trying of their faith worketh pa-

tience, constancy, heavenly heroism; and patience worketh experience; and experience hope; and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. So uniformly and so wonderfully does the Lord bless temptation to the edification of His people, that the great and good Luther said: "One Christian well tempted is worth a thousand." Another of his sayings was: "Three things make a good theologian — meditation, temptation, and prayer."

Like testimonies have been borne by others. Fenelon said: "Temptations, as a file, rub off much of the rust of our self-confidence." Dr. Samuel Clarke says: "Bearing up against temptations and prevailing over them, is the very thing wherein the whole life of religion consists. It is the trial which God puts upon us in this world, by which we are to make evidence of our love and obedience to Him, and of our fitness to be made members of His kingdom."

How ill-prepared would David have been for the conflicts of his riper years had he not fought with the lion and the bear and the giant of Gath when young! Oh, it is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. It makes a man of him. "He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope." All great characters are formed more or less in the school of trial—even sharp trial.

The difference between Daniel going into Babylon and Daniel beholding the fall of the Chaldean monarchy, was as great as could well be imagined. Hardly

any two pious men were less alike than were the young Israelite, and the old prophet pronouncing sentence of death on Lucifer (the son of the morning) when he was about to be cast down to hell.

Compare the young Saul of Tarsus, crying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" with such an one as Paul the aged. How great the contrast! What made the difference? Chiefly his experience in trials and afflictions and temptations.

The little child Moses in the rushes, and the old man Moses, with his eye undimmed and his natural force unabated at the age of one hundred and twenty years, were not so unlike in appearance of body as they were in strength and excellence of character.

Everlasting bliss will bear a proportion to what men have endured for Christ and His cause on earth. Mordecai once wore a crown of gold; and our Saviour once wore a crown of thorns; but in the world to come, the saints shall wear different crowns. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath prepared for them that love Him." So spoke James. Paul says: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight. I have finished my course. I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." Peter says: "When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Oh, what a crowning that will be: life, righteousness, glory—all in one day—all for nothing—all by grace—and all for eternity.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VIEWS OF SIN.

Moral evil is the worst of all evils. Nothing can compare with it. It is worse than the plague. It is unspeakably hateful. God calls sin horrible and abominable. Good men in every age lament it—lament it much in others, most in themselves. The worst thing that can be said of sin is, not that it digs every grave and wrings out every sigh and wail from earth and hell, but that it is “exceeding sinful.”

A man's views of sin give a complexion to all his character. If he regards it as a trifle, he will laugh at it, when he should weep over it. He will make a mock of it. He will dally with it. He will take his fill of it. He will have low thoughts of God, and mean estimates of salvation. He will despise Jesus Christ.

If, on the other hand, he considers sin as very dreadful and very hateful, he will hate every false way. He will long for holiness. He will hunger and thirst after righteousness. He will not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. He will loathe and abhor himself on account of sin. He will be filled with horror because of the wicked, who keep not God's law. He will have exalted thoughts of the being, perfections, word, and government of God. To him Christ will be most precious, the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

Some ask, How far does a sense of sin enter into a genuine religious experience? To some extent, and in some minds, this is a vexed question. The difficulty may arise in part from the fact that some make all religious experience to refer to the earlier exercises of a new-born soul. But the truth is, that first religious views and feelings are but a small part of what the child of God practically learns. In all the three accounts of the conversion of Paul in the Acts of the Apostles, not a word is said of his sense of sin at that time in anything but in opposing Christ's cause. But the work of grace in his heart only then began. In Romans vii. 7-9, he tells us of subsequent experiences: "I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

The meaning of the Apostle seems to be this: "I should never have understood the real nature of sin, the enormity of my guilt, or the number of my transgressions but for the Ten Commandments." If one would know the uncleanness of a neglected apartment, he must let in the light. Dr. Watts notices the growing sense of sin in Paul once saying, "I am not meet to be called an Apostle." Later in life he says, "I am less than the least of all saints." In one of his later epistles, he says, "I am the chief of sinners." Evidently he had to the last a growing sense of sin.

Sometimes when we speak of a sense of sin, men think we are speaking of great terror of conscience or horror of mind. These things may indeed accompany a sense of sin; but they are wholly diverse from it, and are in nowise essential to it. Paul never had less terror than when he was near the end of his life, and had a very deep sense of sin.

But such a sense of sin as makes the Gospel good news to the sinner, would seem to be required by many things in the Scriptures. Our Lord said, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." One of the darkest signs in the state of the Church at Laodicea was that she said she was rich and increased with goods, and had need of nothing; and knew not that she was wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.—Rev. iii. 17.

Job's sense of sin was vastly increased by the great discoveries he had of God's majesty and glory: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Increased views of God's glory had the same effect on the son of Amoz, and made him cry out, "Woe is me! for I am undone."—Job xlii. 5, 6; Isa. vi. 5.

The deeper one's sense of sin is, the livelier is his gratitude for pardon and saving mercy. So taught our Lord: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little."—Luke vii. 47.

In like manner the deeper one's sense of sin, the profounder will be his humility; and humility is the

King's highway to holiness and happiness and heaven.

If these things are so, then he is a good preacher, and that is a good book that increases our just sense of sin. One of the best books John Owen ever wrote was on "Indwelling Sin." It is well suited to show men the fountain of iniquity that is in their hearts. For the same reason we may safely commend Flavel's "Keeping the Heart," Guthrie's "Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ," "The Nonsuch Professor," by an old English Bishop, and many of the writings of the seventeenth century.

But above all, "By the law is the knowledge of sin." Luther said that if for a day he failed to compare his heart with the Ten Commandments, he was sensible of a decline in his pious feelings. One of the best manuals of self-examination is the Westminster Assembly's exposition of the law of God. Let any serious man honestly read the answers there given to the question, What are the sins forbidden? in each of the precepts; and if he is not blind and stupid, his self-abhorrence must be increased.

But any view of ourselves that leads us to despair, is injurious. The true and fair inference from a sense of sickness, is that one needs a physician. A proper sense of sin should lead us more and more to look to Jesus, and to pray that He of God may be made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption. Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.

It is, therefore, common for Christians to admit that there is no little sin. It is easy for men to perplex themselves, and talk foolishly concerning that

which is infinite. But to us all that is illimitable, immeasurable, fathomless, endless, may safely be styled infinite. Is sin, then, an infinite evil?

If sin be not an infinite evil, it must be because God's majesty, glory, and authority are not infinite, for against these is all sin committed.

If sin be not an infinite evil, it could not require an infinite atonement; a limited satisfaction is all that could be fairly required for a finite offense; a measurable compensation is all that can be justly demanded for a crime that can be fully estimated. If sin be not an infinite evil, can it be proven to be any evil at all? God has all claims, all rights, all sovereignty, or He has none at all. Our obligations to Him are boundless, interminable, infinite, or they are not real. If He is such a One as we are, He is no God at all. The reason why false gods may and should be treated with contempt, is because they are vanities. They are matters of inspired ridicule.

God's presence is infinite; His power is infinite; His nature is infinite; His existence is infinite; and so to sin against Him must be an infinite insult and wrong.

If sin be not an infinite evil, we must yet admit that the punishment threatened against it is, in at least one sense, infinite—it is boundless in duration; yea, it is shoreless, fathomless, and terrible as hell.

More than once does God call sin "horrible." It is that abominable thing which He hates. It can not be shown that God hates toads, serpents, hyenas, or anything that He has made. But He hates sin with infinite loathing.

It is bad when one can truly say of an act that it

is unprofitable, dangerous, or mean; but sin is the perfection of meanness; it is more perilous than the flights of the aeronaut; it is so unprofitable that when one commits it, he sows the wind to reap the whirlwind; he loves death.

God's Word acknowledges that sin is great, because God is great. "If a man sin against his neighbor, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?"

Francis Spira said: "Man knoweth the beginnings of sin, but who can tell the bounds thereof?"

"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

"The wages of sin is death."

THE CHRISTIAN'S BESETTING SINS.

Sins are variously classified. First we speak of original sin and of actual sin. Then we speak of sins of omission and sins of commission, of secret sins, open sins, sins of infirmity, presumptuous sins, unnatural sins, and easily besetting sins.

Sins are besetting from various causes. Some are constitutional. Many persons are irritable, choleric, addicted to levity or despondency from their natural temperament. Some sins prevail in the land where men live and so beset everybody. Thus, for hundreds of years—from the days of Epimenides to the time of Paul—the Cretans were terribly fierce, gluttonous, and given to lying. Then sometimes a tidal wave of iniquity rolls over a people, and it seems as if all were beset with the same sins. An old prophet describes such a state of things when he says of his people: "The best of them is a brier—the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge."—Micah vii. 4.

Other sins are besetting from education. Thus, gossiping is taught by example to whole families. The same is true of many sins of the tongue. Official station leads some to sins to which they were formerly but little inclined. Office is apt to beget imperious tempers. Many fall into sins from prejudices which were strong and unreasonable. I have known a man to commit more folly from a dislike to seeing

apple-dumplings on a dinner-table than from any other cause.

Besetting sins are many—as various as human character and occupation. They gain strength by habit, just as do all the vices. Sometimes one person has several of them. Sins live in families. Seldom, if ever, is a sin found alone.

How may we put away besetting sins? — This is a very weighty question. It deserves the most serious attention. Without exhausting the subject, the following suggestions are offered :

1. Obtain and retain a deep and just sense of sin, as an evil and bitter thing, terribly offensive to God, very hateful in itself, and utterly ruinous to the soul. No man ever excessively hated or dreaded sin. The worst thing ever said of sin was, that it is “exceeding sinful.”

2. Learn what your besetting sins are. This will not be easily done. Yet it is possible to gain some clear knowledge of them. Sometimes your friends give you good hints. They say, perhaps very tenderly, that it is a fault in your character that you are harsh, or severe, or vain, or proud, or worldly-minded. Are they not right? Perhaps your enemies speak more plainly, and tell you in unpleasant tones that you are obstinate, self-conceited, covetous, unkind, or ungenerous. Is there any truth in what they say? What does Nathan the prophet (your minister) say in preaching that touches your conscience? What is it that comes up in such power when you are melancholy, when you are in affliction? What causes failure in so many of your attempts to do good and get good?

3. Remember that sin, like the serpent, dies hard. This is true of all sin, especially of a besetting sin. Therefore make a business of exterminating sin. It will kill you if you do not kill it. Your eternal well-being is at stake. Use every means in your power. Some sins go out only by fasting and prayer. Try those means. If your besetting sin is love of the world, see what you can do in mastering it by some noble secret act of almsgiving, or of contribution to the spread of the Gospel. If you are inclined to carry grudges, daily pray that the same mercies may descend on those you dislike as on yourself, and early embrace or create an opportunity to do them a service. Never shun the cross. If you find it lying in your way, take it up and bear it with constancy. "Despise not little sins; they have ruined many a soul. Despise not little duties; they have been to many a saved man an excellent discipline of humility. Despise not little temptations; rightly met they have often nerved the character for some fiery trial. And despise not little crosses; for when taken up and lovingly accepted at the Lord's hand, they have made men meet for a great crown, even the crown of righteousness and life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."

4. Put a high estimate on holiness. It is moral excellence. It is very beautiful. It makes one to be like God. Nothing unholy will stand the test of perfect holiness in the fear of God. This is the will of God concerning you, even your sanctification. "Be ye holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord."

5. In subduing corruptions, some have found it

well to devote special attention for awhile to some one besetting sin. In some cases this may be well. But let us not forget that one sin always argues the presence of other sins, and that while we are watching one thief, others may be close behind us.

6. Watch against occasions of indulging in your besetting sin. If in narrations you are likely to exaggerate, or to adorn the story with a fabrication, then do not often or needlessly tell stories. If in trading you are apt to cry up what you have for sale, or to cry down what you buy, then make as few bargains and with as few words as possible.

7. When you gain an advantage against a corruption, follow it up. Sin dies not except under many lusty blows. And when you think it dead, it is perhaps only asleep. Do your work thoroughly.

8. Seek the constant aid of the Holy Spirit. He searches all things. He hates iniquity. He loves all purity. His indwelling will do more than a guard of angels in driving out sin. He is the Spirit of holiness. He is its author. "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

9. Think much of Christ. Highly prize His honor. Let His name be as ointment poured forth. Walk in Him, walk with Him, live unto Him, die for Him. Draw strength and motives from His teachings, His example, His death, His resurrection, His ascension to heaven, His sitting at God's right hand, and His everlasting kingdom.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

God is independent and sovereign. Man is dependent and responsible. Every sane man knows he must give account to God. Man's nature and relations to God make it fit that he should act under moral law, and be judged accordingly.

It is not possible for any man to entertain too solemn views of the fact that he must at last stand or fall, according to the deeds done in the body. Every man is every day doing things which will affect his destiny to all eternity,

Man has immortal rationality, and of course he will ever be responsible. Suffering will not end it. Happiness will not destroy it. In God's government there is no statute of limitation. Nor has man or angel the power of returning to non-existence. Some have denied that responsibility will be endless.

But if responsibility be not everlasting, then the relations of God and man may cease or change. They can not cease, because God can not deny Himself. They can not cease, because whether man shall be under law is not a question submitted to his choice or decision.

Neither can the relations of God and man change. A change must be for the better or for the worse. If they could change for the better, they would not now be perfectly right and holy. If they should

change for the worse, they would cease to be perfectly right and holy.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then an intelligent creature may sin away his obligations and accountability.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then sin works its own cure, at least so far as not to be any longer punishable. It loses its guilt by its enormity or inveteracy.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then there is a world or a state where God may be insulted with impunity. If this is so, retribution in any case is wholly arbitrary, and is not required by righteousness.

If retribution be not everlasting, then sin is either an evil which in the long run becomes unmanageable, and God at length connives at it, because He does not know how to deal with old transgressors ; or else the evil now declared to belong to unrighteousness is an exaggeration, and who will dare to say that ?

If responsibility be not everlasting, then it will not be so bad to offer insults to God in some other worlds or states as it is in this world, or in the present state.

If responsibility be not everlasting, it must be that God's moral government shall by and by be impaired or fail in some respects.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then by parity of reasoning the fact that one lie is justly punishable does not show that many lies shall be punished.

If responsibility be not everlasting, then righteousness may cease to be righteousness, both in the Judge

of all the earth and in some of His creatures, especially those who offend atrociously.

There is no such thing as a creature being rounded out in good or evil in any sense that renders further growth impossible. Where is there any ground for such belief? It is not found in God's Word. Give us chapter and verse. They can not be found. The reverse is taught in the oracles of God: "They proceed from evil to evil:" "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse."

When the Scriptures speak of our being held accountable for the deeds done in the body, they warn us that our responsibility is begun in this life. We are now acting under law. We are now under moral government. So that it is a solemn thing to live. But God's Word nowhere says or hints that our obligations to God, or our accountability to Him, will terminate when we leave this world and pass to another. Is not moral government in its very nature universal and endless, because it is righteous, and because God changes not? His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is without end. Is not this sound speech that can not be condemned? Let God be glorified; let man be abased.

THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH.

The Word of God says: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That seems to be a very simple way—this way of faith in the Redeemer. It well suits my case. I am foolish and ignorant; Christ is the wisdom of God. I am very sinful and guilty; Christ is the Lord our Righteousness. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. I am very weak; I am without strength; Christ is the power of God unto salvation. I have no cloak for my sin. But the merits of Christ are the linen white and clean with which my poor soul may be beauteously arrayed. My tears can not wash away my sins; but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. In Him sinners boast the possession of greater blessings than angels have—even redeeming love and redeeming grace.

And then I am not required to bring any price in my hand. By the Gospel, salvation is without money and without price. It is well for me that I am not required to pay for salvation. If I were, I should be forever lost. I am a poor sinner—as poor as my sins can make me. I have nothing to commend me to a just and holy God. I deserve all the evil He has denounced against me. I am guilty. I am all unworthiness; but Jesus is worthy. I rely on Jesus. I take Jesus for my Saviour. He is all my desire and

all my salvation. He has borne all the curse. He has died, the just for the unjust, the innocent for the guilty. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. By His stripes we are healed.

One said: "I am no scholar, sir; I have taught myself the last fifteen years, and now I can read a good bit of the Bible; but I can't make out all the big words, you know, sir. Ah! sir, that word '*believe*,' that is a great word with me: it is everything to me; and, as far as I can make out, there is no other way of getting to Jesus. He says: '*Come unto Me*;' and, thank God, I am very happy in coming to Him, by believing on Him."

Oh, yes! no one can rely on Christ too much. He bids us do that great work—that work of God—believing on the Lord Jesus. To believe on Him with the heart is always unto righteousness. It is to look unto Him. It is to come unto Him. It is to receive Him to all the ends and purposes of a complete salvation. It is to reject all other plans and accept the Gospel plan. It is to refuse all other physicians and accept the one great Physician.

Nor is there any danger of being rejected if we come to Christ. He says so: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in nowise cast out." Ever since men began in faith to call upon Him, He has never spurned any from His presence. The penitent thief, the trembling jailer, and millions on millions have looked to Him and were saved. In all the annals of time can be found no record of a sinner believing with the heart, and then perishing in his sins.

Moreover, Christ's atonement is enough. He has

satisfied. He has done enough. He has suffered enough. He has shed enough blood. His undertaking is a glorious undertaking; and it will appear more and more glorious to all eternity. His merits are all-sufficient.

“ If all the sin that men have done
In will, in word, in thought, in deed,
Since worlds were made, and time begun,
Were laid on one poor sinner's head ;
The blood of Jesus Christ alone
Could for this mass of sin atone,
And sweep it all away.”

Who dare say there is any limit to the sufficiency of Christ's atonement? I have never seen nor heard of any good man attempting so presumptuous a sin.

Then the door is so open: “ Behold, I have set before thee an open door.” And every needed preparation is made: “ Behold, all things are ready.” And the Lord is in such earnest: “ As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but [I have pleasure] that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” And I am in such need of help, of just such help as is offered me in Christ Jesus. “ Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” Of God, Jesus is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. He is all and in all. It is only by faith in Christ that we enter into rest—a blessed rest, that shall last forever.

“ Rest, weary soul ;
The penalty is borne, the ransom paid,
For all thy sins full satisfaction made.
Strive not thyself to do what Christ has done.
Take the free gift, and make the joy thine own.
No more by pangs of guilt and fear distressed,
Rest, sweetly rest.”

Such is the faith of the weak believer; such is the faith of the strong believer. Its essence is reliance on the person and work of the Redeemer.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.

WHY DO I REST CONFIDENTLY IN CHRIST?

This question has been sent me by a friend. I willingly answer it. I begin by saying that if we repose any confidence in Christ at all, the more firmly we do it, the better. Weak faith may be both genuine and saving; but the stronger our faith is, the more is God glorified, and the greater is our peace.

Boasting in an arm of flesh, or relying on an arm of flesh, is very foolish. But we never act so wisely as when we make our boast in the Lord. To glory in the Cross of Christ is lawful, yea, praiseworthy. A strong confidence in the Son of God removes mountains of sorrow and difficulty. Faith can not be too strong. Confidence becomes presumption only when it is not warranted by Scripture. The more fully and unhesitatingly I credit every word that God has spoken, the more do I act in accordance with sound wisdom. Here are some reasons:

1. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He counted it not robbery to be equal with God. He is over all, God blessed forever. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily. He is the true God and eternal life. He has all the perfections of Jehovah. He knows all my wants and weakness, all my sin and misery. He knows the malice of my enemies, and the foolishness of my heart. He is of power to subdue my whole nature to Himself, and to defeat the

wiles and machinations of my foes. His grace is all-sufficient. His love is infinite. His wisdom can not be defeated, nor His power resisted. He is God. I can not trust Him excessively. I rest confidently in Him because He is God, and is fitly adored in heaven and on earth.

2. I rest confidently in Christ because He is man. He has my whole nature, sin only excepted. He has the heart of a brother. He has a feeling of my infirmity. He was tempted in all points as I am, yet without sin. He drank the cup of sorrow to the dregs. He tasted the bitterness of death. He knows what it is to be rejected of men and deserted by God. I have no sorrow to which He is a stranger. He sympathizes with me in all my innocent joys and tastes, as well as in my sufferings and temptations.

3. I rest confidently in Christ because God the Father approves Him and trusts Him. He prepared Him a body. He gloriously anointed Him, and set Him apart to His work. Twice by an audible voice He declared: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He stood by Him in all His undertaking. He raised Him from the dead. He set Him at His own right hand. He has committed all judgment to His Son. He is the delight of His Father. It can not but be safe and wise in me to rest in Him, in whom His Father confides.

4. I rest confidently in Christ because He has never failed to save and succor any and every one that has fled to Him for salvation. Of all who have come short of the heavenly rest, not one put his trust in

the Lord Jesus Christ. The men who tire and faint and turn away from the holy commandment, never saw the real glory that is in Christ Jesus. To them He never was the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. They may have said that all their desire and all their hope were in Christ, but they were deceived. Hear the beloved disciple on such persons: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."—I John ii. 19.

5. I rest confidently in Christ because He has given me every assurance that I can desire. By word and by deed, by signs and sacraments, by His painful death, and by His present glorious life, I am persuaded that He will do all that is for the good of His believing people. Hear Him: "Because I live, ye shall live also."—John xiv. 19. Hear Paul: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"—Rom. viii. 32. The promises are great and precious, and almost countless. I know no man who has ever numbered them. And in Christ Jesus they are all Yea, and in Him, Amen. Nor are they burdened with impracticable conditions. To every humble soul He says: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

6. I rest confidently in Christ because I have had a blessed experience of His grace and compassion. Once I was a poor lost sinner, ready to perish. My guilt was fearful. He passed by and said, "Live, for

I have ransomed thee." I found pardon and acceptance in His blood and righteousness. I was all defiled, and had an evil heart of unbelief. He took away the heart of stone, and gave me a heart of flesh. I was blind. I saw no beauty in holiness or in Jesus Christ. He anointed my eyes, and I saw His glory, full of grace and truth. I once was afraid of the Almighty, but Christ has given me His spirit, so that I cry, Abba, Father. I once loved sin, some forms of it very much; but by His grace I hate vain thoughts and every false way. I abhor that which is evil. Left to myself I was weak as water. I had no might to do good. But by His grace I can do all things, because He strengthens me. My experience surprises me and delights me.

7. I rest confidently in Christ Jesus because He could not reject any that came to Him without refusing the only reward ever promised Him for all His work and sufferings. That reward was seeing poor lost sinners returning from their sins and wanderings to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. The Scripture clearly teaches that Christ's reward should be that "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands;" that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads;" and that for all His sufferings God "will divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong." Surely I ought to be ready to rely on a Redeemer who has done and suffered all required of Him for my salvation. Having loved His own, He loved

them to the end. Will He now cast away the souls He has bought at so great a price? I trow not.

8. I rest confidently in Christ, because He is King on the holy hill of Zion, wields a sceptre of righteousness, has many crowns upon His head, is actually subduing all His enemies, and is Lord of all to the glory of God the Father; because He is still the Great Prophet, and the way of life, saying: "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly;" and because He is my Great High-Priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for me. Him the Father heareth alway. And so He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.

For these and many similar reasons I rest confidently in Christ. Nor shall I be disappointed. I look to Him alone. Angels can not save me. My brother can not pay to God a ransom for me. I can not save myself. To whom can I go but to Jesus only? He has the words of eternal life. I will rest in Him only. I will rest in Him confidently and forever, and in Him my rest shall be glorious.

Of course such a one wholly renounces self-righteousness.

I was riding across the State of New Jersey on the old Camden and Amboy Railroad. Just before reaching the eastern terminus we were detained some minutes on a part of the route where the land is very sterile. I had no friend with me. Most of the passengers seemed to be without companions. Various remarks were made as if for the ears of all. At length one gentleman, looking out on the white sands, said, "How is this land like self-righteousness?" Some

one replied, "Because the more of it one has, the poorer he is." I thought the conundrum good and the answer excellent. The more self-righteousness one has, the poorer he is.

It strikes me as true that the poorer one is in moral good, the more self-righteousness he has. In other words, the farther one goes in sin, the harder it is to lead him to a right view of his sins. For more than fifty years I have, as I had opportunity, visited prisons, and conversed freely with their inmates. I have attended several unhappy men to their public execution. In all this time I have never heard one frank and full confession of crime. One man admitted that he had killed his wife ; but he seemed to excuse himself by saying that he was drunk when he did it. I have never seen a convict who admitted the fairness of his trial, the veracity of the witnesses, and the impartiality of the judge. This is an amazing record. I am greatly surprised at it. Like the lawyer mentioned in Luke x. 29, every one was "willing to justify himself."

How is this? It may be safely answered that crimes against both person and property terribly harden the heart. But it is also true that the more men sin, the less sense of sin have they, unless God's Spirit very much quickens the conscience. The more men sin, the blinder they are. The farther a man goes into a dark cave, the more dim are his perceptions.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.

Hope thou in God.—Why should I not? I need just such a friend. He has all power and strength, and I am very weak. I can not even think a good thought of myself. Nor do I know how to pray as I ought. If the Lord does not help my infirmities, I shall do nothing aright. But I can do all things if He will gird me with strength. I will hope in God.

He has, too, all the knowledge to understand my whole case, and all the wisdom necessary to direct everything concerning me. He makes no mistakes. He is never deceived. He is never overreached. He knows all things. He knows my weaknesses. He knows my sorrows. He knows my sincerity. And He is so wise that He takes the cunning in their own craftiness. His wisdom never fails. It is never non-plussed. I will hope in God.

Then He has as much mercy and kindness as I need. His loving-kindness is so great that human belief has never seen to the top or the bottom, to the length or the breadth of it. The ocean of the Divine love is boundless and inexhaustible. God's love is strong. It passes the love of women. It is infinite. It produces the most amazing results. It fills all pious hearts with joy. It fills heaven with hallelujahs. Oh, I will hope in God.

Nor could I desire more truth and faithfulness than

are found in God. They are unchangeable and immeasurable. They reach unto the clouds, yea, above the heavens. They are unto all generations. God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent. Hath He said, and shall He not do it? He has never broken covenant with any of His creatures. His mercies are rich and free. That is a blessed truth, but it would be powerless if we could not also say that His mercies are sure. Oh, I must and will hope in God.

If I hope not in God, I will be apt to look to myself, and I am a fool and a sinner, a worm and blind, crushed before the moth, and unworthy of the very least of God's mercies. Who has at any time trusted in himself that he was righteous, or wise, or strong, and has not come to shame? I dare not lean to my own understanding, nor rely on my own wisdom, nor put any hope in my own righteousness. Lord God of hosts, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, give me grace to hope in Thee.

Nor dare I look to any man for help. All bad men are fools and sinners; all good men have said that they are not worthy of any weighty trust. The best of them cry out, "I am undone," "I am a sinful man," "Oh, wretched man that I am." I dare not look to such for any effectual aid. I must hope in God.

Nor dare I make angels the objects of my hope. They have no wisdom, goodness, or power, except what they derive from the Lord. Left to themselves, they would utterly fail. They are not clean in God's sight, and He charges them with folly. As God's

servants they may minister to me, and by His power and at His command help me. But it is of the Lord's mercies, not of the mercies of angels, that we are saved. I can not worship angels. I hope in God.

I would hope confidently. My heart is in this matter. I would not falter here. I am ashamed that I am so slow to cast my anchor here and nowhere else. I will set my hope in God.

Hoping in God I shall never be disappointed. All will come out right in the end. Mercies may be long delayed, but they will come at the very nick of time, the very best time, the time chosen by infinite wisdom and goodness. Look at the generations of old and see if any did ever trust in the Lord and were disappointed. All the saints in glory are unanimous in saying that God fulfilled to them all the engagements He ever made. I will hope in His truth, His mercy, and His power.

Nor is it presumptuous in me to hope in God. He has bidden me to do it. It is always safe and right to obey the will of the Lord and to hearken to His commands. This is in itself a very pleasant duty enjoined on me. If I were bidden to despair of help from God, the very thought of such a thing would freeze my soul with horror. I may lawfully come to God with boldness. I may come even to His mercy-seat. I may fill my mouth with arguments. I may call Him my God, my Father, my Shepherd, my Rock, my Friend, my Portion, my exceeding Joy, my everlasting All. Oh, I will hope in God, if He will but help me to do so.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

"GOD moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform ;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

"Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take :
The clouds ye so much dread -
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace :
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

"His purposes will ripen fast
Unfolding every hour ;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His works in vain ;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

In religious literature, both inspired and uninspired, we find much concerning hope. Let us consider a few specimens of the former class.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath

begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”—Peter.

“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.”—Paul.

“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”—Jeremiah.

“Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. I have hoped for thy salvation and done thy commandments.”—David.

THE CHRISTIAN'S TRUST.

In his darkest days, Job said : "*Though he slay me, y t will I trust him.*" That was a noble purpose, a blessed resolution.

1. It was called for. There was need of it. Job's circumstances were trying, and demanded that he should take his stand firmly on right ground. It met his case exactly. He knew not what might come ; but come what might, he would cleave to the Lord.

2. It was prompt. In it was nothing dilatory. He did not require time and argument to work him up to the good purpose. He uttered it as soon as it was called for. He delayed not, but made haste to flee to God.

3. He had doubtless often said as much before. It is of the very nature of piety to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. As one said at a later day, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." There is no piety without hearty confidence in God.

4. It was unfeigned. Job meant what he said ; and he said what he meant. He was sincere. No hypocrite under like circumstances would have used such language, but would have given up in despair—would have cursed (or renounced) God and died.

5. It was a wise resolution. We never act so fool-

ishly as when we withdraw our confidence from God. "The fearful" are in Scripture said to have their portion with "the abominable, and murderers, and all liars."—Rev. xxi. 8. The reason why men do not trust God is because they are wicked. They do not know Him, nor love Him. They hate Him. We never act so wisely as when we cast our burden on the Lord.

6. It is true the man of Uz acted strangely. God's people are a peculiar people. They are not of this world. They savor the things that are of God and not of men. They are born from above. They are taught of God. There was something quite unusual in Job's conduct. Not many of his contemporaries, nor many of any past age, have imitated Job. It is not commonly regarded as wise to risk life and all things on one's religious faith—one's faith in God.

7. So Job's purpose must have been gracious. By the grace of God he said what he did. In himself Job was as weak as other men. He abhorred himself and repented in dust and ashes. But the Lord was with him and enabled him to witness a good confession. He had help from heaven. It was not by might, nor by power, but by God's Spirit that he chose his ground.

8. His resolution was kept. From it he never swerved. Though he said some things that did not become him, yet he never drew back from God. The best resolutions, if broken, are good for nothing. To the last Job denied the charge of a base hypocrisy. To the last he stuck to the Lord his God.

9. His purpose and action on it turned out well.

The Lord approved in the main Job's conduct. He said to his three friends: "Ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." "The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning." He did not trust in vain. All ended well. "Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."

10. The darker our way, the more we should trust. God does sometimes slay His people. He kills and He makes alive. He has the keys of death and of hell. Job thought the Lord would probably cut him off with pining sickness. But yet he could not and would not forsake the Rock of his salvation.

Reader, will you follow Job's example? You can not do better. To go backward from the Almighty is ruin. To distrust Him is excessive folly. There is not one virtuous feeling involved in departing from the living God. To renounce Jehovah is death. If you trust Him, let no other trust intrude. Renounce all else. Some make gold their confidence; some trust in chariots and some in horses; some in bows and some in swords; some in native powers and some in acquirements. But wise and good men trust only in the Lord their God.—Job xxxi. 24; Ps. xx. 7; Ps. xliv. 6; Isa. xl. 30, 31.

And all should trust in the Lord, even the sucking child, the widow, the fatherless, the friendless, and the man that is ready to perish.—Ps. xxii. 9; Jer. xlix. 11; Ps. lxxv. 5; 1 Tim. iv. 10.

The benefits of such trust are many.

a. This is the only way to great spiritual prosper-

ity. "He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat."—Prov. xxviii. 25. Compare Ps. xxxi. 19.

b. This is the great cure of that fear which brings the soul into bondage. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid."—Isa. xii. 2. Compare Isa. l. 10.

c. If we trust not in the Lord, we can not expect any fixedness of joy or stability of character. "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which can not be removed, but abideth forever." "The heart of the upright is fixed, trusting in the Lord."—Ps. cxxv. 1; cxii. 7.

d. Safety is found in no other way than in pious confidence. "He is a buckler to all those that trust in Him;" "Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."—Ps. xviii. 30; Prov. xxix. 25. Compare Dan. iii. 28.

e. Our usefulness and comfort depend on our confidence in Jehovah. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."—Ps. xxxvii. 3.

f. Trust in God is the great solace of old age. So the Psalmist found it. "Thou art my hope, O Lord God; Thou art my trust from my youth. . . . Now also when I am old and gray-headed, O God, forsake me not."—Ps. lxxi. 5, 18.

Oh, "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." When will men so learn and so practice?

A CHRISTIAN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

“The road to hell is paved with good resolutions” I know not who first uttered this alarming sentence. But it contains a fearful truth. Vast numbers of men go to an undone eternity, who not only never had any purpose of so doing, but they actually purposed the contrary. Yet their good resolutions failed. They were not as solemn as they ought to have been. They were also made in human strength. The poor sinner, who made them, did not know that he had a deceitful heart, a wicked world, and a great adversary to contend with. He did not know that he had in himself no might to do good, that he was not sufficient as of himself to think anything, and that he could not even pray aright, except as the Holy Spirit enabled him. Thus his resolutions were not humble, nor did they make lowly him who made them. On the contrary, they filled his mind and heart with folly and vanity. He foolishly supposed that he was better for having made them. Consequently he broke them. The road to hell is paved with good resolutions that are *broken*, not kept.

The road to heaven is paved with good resolutions, with fixed purposes, and holy determinations of mind, formed under a deep sense of weakness and unworthiness, with a pious confidence in the promised aid of Divine grace, and with a holy fear and

jealousy over one's own heart. I can remember when it was boldly and unwisely proclaimed that regeneration was nothing but a change of the governing purpose. This was a great practical error. It filled many churches with unworthy members. It begat a very superficial class of professors. Very few are found maintaining this position in our day. In opposing this error, some, perhaps, used unguarded expressions, making the impression that piety grew and flourished without any fixed purposes in the heart. This was as dangerous as the error it opposed. Where or when did ever a wise man undertake or accomplish any great or good work without a settled and deliberate purpose to do so? Whoever would become a scholar, make a crop, or build a house, will naturally first form and fix his plan, and then carry it out. Life without a purpose is vague and vain. Aim at something and then do your best to accomplish it. Look at a few things in the Scripture.

“And Abram took Sarai, his wife, and Lot, his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.” If you do not go forth to do a thing, you will hardly do it. Set a practicable object before you, and by God's blessing you may accomplish it. Hear the prodigal: “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired

servants." This resolution was the result of sad experience and sound reflection. It was humble. It was honest, for it is added, "And he arose and came to his father." If he had remained much longer in that land of famine, he would have perished. It is not according to wisdom to do anything without purposing to do it.

Read the writings of David, and see how often and how solemnly he resolves to love, and pray, and praise, and obey the Lord. Could he have been so eminent a servant of the Lord, if he had not been so fully purposed in his mind? So far as reason and Scripture speak on this subject, they distinctly require—

1. That our good resolutions be not hastily or hurriedly taken, but that they be well weighed. It is a snare unto a man after vows to make inquiry. God abhors all false pretenses, all hollow professions. Think, think solemnly and deliberately before you set your hand to a covenant even with men. But where the transaction is with God, we can not be too jealous of our own hearts. He has no pleasure in fools.

2. Any purpose to serve God should be sincere, not hypocritical; cheerful, not reluctant; hearty, not formal. God loves a cheerful giver. The prodigal had a great sense of shame, but no reluctance to return. He took blame to himself, but his hope was that he would at least be allowed the place of a hired servant, which was more than he deserved, and far better than his present condition.

3. Beware of limiting your resolutions of consecra-

tion to God. Some are ready to engage to give Him lip-service. Others seem ready to serve Him secretly, and as it were by stealth ; but they are not ready to witness a good confession before many witnesses. Some would be willing to engage for a time, but they are not ready to serve God all their lives, yea, to all eternity. Others wish such or such a sin spared. They say it is a little matter. That is not the way.

Reader, deal not so with God. Give Him all ; for after all, it is but little that you can do for Him, who has done so much for you.

4. In all your resolutions, keep your eye on the person, work, grace, example, sufferings, righteousness, power, and intercession of Christ. Without Him you can do nothing. His blood can cleanse, but nothing else can wash away the stain of sin. His priestly offering can avail for remission, but your tears can not purge away a single sin. He is mighty to save, and you need an Almighty Saviour. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He is Alpha and Omega. Look to Jesus.

5. Never forget your dependence upon the power and indwelling of God's Spirit. He is the holy anointing oil, with which humble souls are made kings and priests unto God. We are blind, but the Holy Spirit is the eye-salve to open the blind eyes. We are dumb in God's praises, but under His power the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly. We are sad and despondent in good things, but He is the oil of gladness to all the saints. The words in which our resolutions are formed may be very few, but they

should be very explicit. Some have recommended a covenant fully drawn up and in express terms. This may be well in many cases. The danger is that the words will not be well chosen, and so in the end will entangle the conscience. But an upright mind will hardly be perplexed with a resolution simple like that of Joshua, or like that in one of our hymns :

“ Here, Lord, I give myself away,
’Tis all that I can do.”

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. What do you purpose in your heart? What are your good resolutions? Are you living up to those you have made?

THE CHRISTIAN LIVES BY RULE.

A great man of the last century said, "He who lives not by rule, lives not at all." Perhaps there is more truth in that assertion than some are at first disposed to admit. Life is very short. A very great work is to be done, or we shall be forever undone. Confusion is very bad. It greatly hinders all good things. There is no example of success without a plan. Method is essential to a good habit, and good habit imparts vigor to character.

Living by rule does not consist in gathering and remembering many notions, though it does presuppose some acquaintance with good maxims. A French dramatist brings in a man full of wonder at the discovery that he had been speaking prose all his life and did not know it. Good poems were written before any rules for the great art had been codified. So men who are renewed in heart are correct in life to some extent before they know all the rules that should govern human conduct. Still, maxims are good and should be studied. Some of the rules of God's Word are prudential. Such are many things in the Book of Proverbs. Some are devotional, as in the Sermon on the Mount, and in many epistles; some are practical, as in the twelfth chapter of Romans; some are experimental, as in the Psalms. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable

in some way to advance the Divine life in the soul. The following rules would be very helpful to many :

1. Set the Lord always before you. Live as seeing Him, who is invisible. Often say, Thou, God, seest me. To God we must give account. In Him we live and move and have our being. From Him is our fruit found. He is our Rock, our Refuge, our High Tower, our Strength. Blessed is he who frames his doings to please his Maker. Some professed Christians live very much as they would if they thought there was no God.

2. Know, believe, and practice the whole Word of God. Indulge no prejudices against any portion of the Bible. All of it is truth—all of it is precious truth. The part of Scripture which you slight, probably contains the very truth most needful for the correction of some of your faults. The threatenings warn, the precepts guide, the promises encourage, the doctrines instruct, the examples draw, the histories illustrate, the poems delight. "The law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver." "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food."

3. Adopt the pure Gospel scheme of doctrine. Begin not in the spirit, and then hope to be made perfect by the flesh. It is very sad to see men turning away from the glorious Gospel of the blessed God to fables, however cunningly they may be devised. Whereunto you have attained in evangelical knowledge, hold fast. Never yield first principles; never be beguiled into any form of unsound words. What

is the chaff to the wheat? As long as Christ is all in all to you, you are safe; but when you delight in any other way of life, you are guilty of spiritual harlotry. In no way can we more offend against God than by slighting His Son.

4. Put a just estimate on time and eternity: on time, because it is so short, because its pursuits are so vain, because on the right use of it depend everlasting consequences; on eternity, because it is eternity—it has no bounds, it is more vast than the sea, it gives to hell its most impenetrable gloom, and to heaven the unfailing fixedness of its joys.

5. Do whatever is incumbent each moment as it passes. Gape and gaze not after the duties of a future which may never arrive. Waste not life in idle regrets over a past which can not be reclaimed. Just do present duty. Stand in your lot. Be at your post. Watch and pray. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. No one has or gives so good assurance that in the future he will be found faithful, as he who is now steadfast with God and righteous in all his ways.

6. Do good to all men as you have opportunity. Deal out kindnesses and favors with an unsparing hand. The cause you understand not, search out. If you can not find happiness by direct search, try another plan. Make others happy, and see if that does not make you truly blessed. I saw a little child asked to share its apple with its playmate. It refused, and at once frowned and looked miserable. I saw another child asked to do the same thing, and with a benignant smile that told of inward joy, it called on

its mother to divide the luscious fruit. All the malevolent passions are tormentors; all the benevolent affections conduce to happiness.

7. Another good rule to live by is this: Never make a mock at sin and never jest with sacred things. Let holiness to the Lord be written on His day, His word, His worship, His name, His cause.

8. Never attempt to find out how near you can come to sin without sinning. He that loveth danger shall perish therein. Sam Patch made many a foolish leap, but it was only the last that was fatal. In abhorring evil and in cleaving to that which is good there is no danger of excess.

9. Never expect great things from sloth, nor regard carelessness as the parent of any good. Feeble efforts can not produce powerful results. It is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich.

10. Steadfastly set your face against needless delays in doing any work for the honor of your Master, for the good of your fellow-men, or for your own edification. A dilatory spirit is one of the most delusive of all the temptations of the Great Destroyer. It proposes merely to postpone, perhaps for an hour or a day. It would shudder at the thought of final and utter neglect of what it thus defers. Do this very day and hour the duties which this hour and day demand.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ENEMIES.

That was a good prayer of David, "Lead me in a plain path, because of mine enemies."—Ps. xxvii. 11. A similar is that in Ps. v. 8.: "Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness, because of mine enemies." Divine guidance is in every respect a blessing. When surrounded by foes we must fall, unless God leads and protects us. At such a time it is a great mercy to be kept from perplexity respecting duty. "A plain path," a smooth, clear, open way is of the Lord. The reasons are obvious.

Our enemies are numerous. "Many are my persecutors and mine enemies." How the dogs do beset some good men. Packs of them pursue some all their days. One man often contends against a thousand enemies.

Our enemies often have power, and wealth, and influence on their side. They are also lively.—Ps. xxxviii. 19. They sleep not except they do some mischief; nor do they measure their hostility. They are like wild beasts. They roar.—Ps. lxxiv. 4. They make a tumult.—Ps. lxxxiii. 2. They are very violent.

Indeed they are often deadly. Since the days of Pharaoh, their great model, each cries: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword; mine hands shall destroy them."

Nothing is more noticeable than the merriment of the wicked over sacred things and innocent people. "Our enemies laugh among themselves."—Ps. lxxx. 6. So we still have in the world "cruel mockings," even where "scourgings" and "imprisonments" are unlawful. They love to cry, Aha! aha!

Oftentimes our enemies are so allied to us that we have no more peace at home than abroad.—Mic. vii. 6. When this is the case, they are a smoke in the eyes, a thorn in the flesh.

Very often they are full of treachery. "The kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Judas was neither the first nor the last who pretended friendship with the basest hypocrisy.

Some men's enmity has no holidays. It never wanes. It never cools. "And Saul became David's enemy continually."—I Sam. xviii. 29.

Such enemies often produce a deep impression on others, persuading them that we are evil. No small part of Saul's subjects really believed that David was a bad man, so that he says: "I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance; they that did see me without, fled from me. I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind. I am like a broken vessel."

Even good men may be often greatly distressed by such hatred. David says: "Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies." Read the Book of Lamentations, and see how Jeremiah sighed and wept under the raging of his foes.

It is no small part of wisdom to know how to treat

our foes. God gave Solomon a great blessing because he had "not asked the life of his enemies."—1 Kings iii. 11, 12; 2 Chron. i. 11, 12. We must love our enemies.—Matt. v. 44; Luke vi. 27–35. We must pray for them at all times, feed them when hungry, clothe them when naked, lend to them when needy.

God always takes sides with the just against all their wicked foes. His promise is: "I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."—Ex. xxiii. 22. The good man will God never "deliver unto the will of his enemies."

And it is very easy for God to defeat and overthrow all our enemies. He says: "I will send a faintness into their hearts; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth."—Lev. xxvi. 36. See also Ex. xxiii. 27.

Under the shadow of God's wings His people are safe from all their adversaries. He stills the enemy and the avenger. "Thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy."—Ps. lxi. 3. God can make our worst enemies to be at peace with us.—Prov. xvi. 7. God can convert foes into friends: "Verily I will cause the enemy to entreat thee well in the time of evil and in the time of affliction."—Jer. xv. 11. God's power can subdue any will, change any heart.

Every child of God may therefore address every foe, as did the Church of old: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have

sinned against Him, until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me; He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold His righteousness. Then she that is mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her which said unto me, Where is the Lord thy God? Mine eyes shall behold her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets."

Oh, how sweet will be the rest of heaven. There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest, and the righteous have everlasting deliverance from all their enemies.

A late writer gives this good practical advice: Have you enemies? Go straight on and mind them not. If they block up your path, walk around them, and do your duty regardless of their spite. A man who has no enemies is seldom good for anything—he is made of that kind of material which is so easily worked that every one has a hand in it. A sterling character—one who thinks for himself, and speaks what he thinks—is always sure to have enemies. They are as necessary to him as fresh air; they keep him alive and active. A celebrated character, who was surrounded with enemies, used to remark: 'They are sparks which, if you do not blow, will go out of themselves.' Let this be your feeling while endeavoring to live down the scandal of those who are bitter against you. If you stop to dispute, you do but as they desire, and open the way for more abuse. Let the poor fellows talk; there will be a reaction if you perform but your duty, and hundreds who were once alienated from you will flock to you and acknowledge their error."

THE CHRISTIAN'S SHEPHERD.

He leadeth me.—I certainly need some one to lead me. I am so poor, so blind, so weak, so foolish that, if left to myself, I must fatally err. For a long time I required the help of nurses and the guidance of parents and teachers; and when I ceased to have these, I needed God's help as much as ever. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. We have in our language hardly any form of speech that expresses a sadder state than when we say of a man, "He is awfully left to himself." Lord, never leave me nor forsake me, lest I be undone.

Then He leadeth me so gently. Even when all around is uproar and confusion, I am carried along almost as if there was no commotion in the world. When God gives peace, who can make perturbation? The Lord is more true in His friendship than a brother, more pitiful than a father, more loving than a mother, more gentle than a woman. He doth not afflict willingly. Nor does the Lord ever lead me otherwise than wisely. He makes no mistakes. He knows the way I ought to go. He knows how much sweet and how much bitter are best for me. He understands me fully. He knows my spirit would fail before Him if I were dealt with severely. Oh, how He mingles mercy with judgment!

True, He leads me often in a mysterious way. I

see not the end from the beginning. I can not see afar off. If I perfectly comprehended all God's ways, I think I should be capable of guiding myself, at least to some extent. When all His waves and billows go over me, how can I tell anything? Would Jacob, or Joseph, or Bunyan, or Rogers have chosen the way the Lord led them? Have not the saints long been crying, "O Lord, how long?" His footsteps are in the sea; clouds and darkness are round about Him. He giveth account of none of His matters. His judgments are a great deep. But He never does wrong. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. In review of all the past I can truly say, "Thou hast dealt well with Thy servant, O Lord. I know that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me."

Then He leads me always: in prosperity and in adversity; in joy and in sorrow; when alone and when surrounded by others. If He left me even for an hour I should be undone. When I sleep, Thou, Lord, keepest vigil over me. When I awake, I am still with Thee. On the land and on the sea I am kept by the mighty power of God.

He leadeth me, and I will trust Him. He deserves my entire confidence. It is my sin and my folly that I am so slow of heart to repose confidence in Him. I will try to do better. Lord, give me the heritage of them that seek shelter under the shadow of Thy wings. Thou art my Shield, my Refuge, my Strong Rock, my God and Saviour.

He leadeth me, and I will follow Him. I will

put my hand in His, and go wherever His prudence shall direct. Never yet has He brought me into needless trouble. When affliction has gained its end, relief, in some form, has come. I will mark His footsteps, and go right forward. He will guide me by His counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Oh, well, if glory is to follow sorrow and anguish, I will say no more :

“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrows are unknown.”

I must be content that He should have His way. My will is the will of a worm, a fool, a sinner. “Not my will, but Thine be done, O God.” I care not what comes if the end be eternal life—everlasting repose in the bosom of God. Guide me on and up and through, O Lord. Be Thou on my right hand and on my left by day and by night. Strengthen me with strength in my soul.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ADVOCATE.

Who needs an Advocate? The accused. And are we accused? Yes; and we are rightly charged with many offences. Sin has ruined us. Iniquities have sadly prevailed against us. They have brought us into disgrace before God, and angels, and men. Our own consciences indict and convict us. We can not answer for one of a thousand of our transgressions. In the court of Heaven our names are worthless. God often reminds us of this, telling us that if He shows mercy or spares us, it is not for our sakes. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.

And is there any Advocate for such transgressors? Yes. Is it a sinful man like ourselves? No. Such an one could not answer for himself. Is it some holy angel? No. If such an one were to hear the whole story of our guilt, he would throw up our cause from disgust at such baseness and ingratitude. It is Jesus Christ. He pleads and manages our cause before His Father. We have an Advocate. Thanks be to God for that.

Our Advocate can lay His hand upon our offended Judge. He counts it not robbery to be equal with God. In Him the Father is well pleased. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. All the hosts of God worship Him. To Him the Father has committed all judgment and all authority. We are

required to honor the Son as we honor the Father. God has given Him a name that is above every name. He is as full of power as He is of truth and grace. There is none with Him. He needs no help. There is none like Him. He is over all, God blessed forever.

And He has our nature also. He was once a weeping babe, a friendless stranger, and sorely tempted of the Devil. He is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. He has a brother's heart. He knows by experience every kind of sorrow which it was possible for innocence to endure. Above all others was He a man of sorrows. He wept ; He sweated blood ; He hungered ; He thirsted ; He expired on the cross ; He bore God's wrath.

And then He was without sin. He knew no sin. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Pilate found no fault in Him. Infidelity has detected no flaw in His character. Omniscient purity declared Him sinless, faultless. Now we may glory in Him. If we sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, THE RIGHTEOUS. Our hope springs from His worthiness and His merits ; in no sense from anything in us. He is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. That is His name.

Then He is a tried Friend of sinners. God has tried Him and found Him faithful as an Advocate for men. Many penitents have tried Him and found Him gracious. He has never undertaken a cause and lost it. He is mighty to save. His advocacy can not but succeed. Him the Father heareth always. All the redeemed in glory are monuments of the efficacy of His intercession.

All this is right. He gave Himself for us as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. He poured out His soul unto death. The Lord made His soul an offering for sin. He redeems not with silver and gold, but with His own most precious blood. The ransom He paid was of infinite value. There is no limit to its sufficiency.

“ Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power
Till all the ransomed Church of God
Be saved to sin no more.”

Those blessed hands which were pierced for us on Calvary are the hands which are lifted up for us before the eternal and propitious throne above.

Of the manner of His advocacy we know but little, except that it is very glorious, full of dignity, and full of power. He appears for us. That is enough. Dr. Doddridge represents Him as introducing His chosen to the Father, admitting that they are worthy of death, but pleading that He has died for them.

Of the substance of His advocacy we need entertain no doubt. It is pretty fully explained in His great intercessory prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John.

Now, does any humble soul wish for a sure ground of hope? He has it in Christ's pleading his cause. “ Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.”—Luke xxii. 31, 32. And it did not fail—his faith recalled him and made him weep bitterly.

In availing ourselves of Christ's advocacy, let us know what our case is; let us attempt no concealment; let us tell Him all, and let us commit to Him the whole matter. None is able to destroy, if He protects. None can condemn those whom He justifies.

Nor need we be deterred from seeking His mercy by the greatness of our guilt. He saves the chief of sinners as readily as the least of sinners. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him. Reader! you may think your case very bad, and so it is. But you are not worse than the chief of sinners. You may be the uttermost; but you are not beyond the uttermost. Hope in His mercy. Oh, give Him your confidence. Lean on His almighty arm. Take Him as your Advocate.

THE CHRISTIAN'S EARNEST.

Inspired writers are exceedingly intent on impressing their thoughts on others. They seize on anything that will aid them in their work. They speak of breaking up fallow ground, of sowing and reaping, of building and journeying, when by these things they can unfold or explain what they mean. Paul sees an altar inscribed TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. He immediately proposes to tell them of that very God. Sometimes buying and selling with their various terms and usages serve their turn. Nor do they care whether a usage or idea is heathen or Jewish, so that it is pertinent to the matter in hand. Paul often refers to racing, wrestling, and fighting to elucidate his meaning, though these ideas were foreign from the school of Gamaliel. So, also, Paul borrows a word from trade among the Phenicians, *Arrahon*, to teach a very important truth.

This word is always rendered *earnest*, in the sense of handsel, pledge, token of something yet to come. It occurs thrice in the New Testament, and only in the writings of Paul: "Now, He which establisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; who hath also sealed us, and given us the EARNEST of the Spirit in our hearts;" "Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the EARNEST of the Spirit;" "In

whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the EARNEST of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."—2 Cor. i. 22 ; v. 5 ; Eph. i. 13, 14.

In many ways does God comfort His people. Sometimes it is by sacraments, which are signs and seals of His covenant. Sometimes it is by promises and oaths, that by these two immutable things His saints might have strong consolation. Sometimes it is by tokens for good, some visible evidence of Divine regard such as is noticed in Ps. xli. 11 : "By this I know that Thou favorest me." Compare Ps. lxxxvi. 17. Sometimes it is by giving us an EARNEST.

But what is an earnest? Brown defines it as "Somewhat given in hand to give assurance that what more is promised shall be given in due time. It differs from a pledge, as it is not taken back when full payment is made." Burrill says that "An earnest is part of the price paid for property or goods sold, or money given in token that a bargain is ratified, or to bind a contract ; often called earnest-money." It seems that the merchants of Phenicia either first or most extensively resorted to the arrabon, the earnest. One who disregarded the solemnity or obligations of the Earnest, would have been infamous.

Now the Earnest God gives His people is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Sanctifier, and Guide of His redeemed people. Peace of conscience, assured to us by the Blessed Spirit of God, is a sure forerunner of life and peace beyond the grave. He who has

the fruits of the Spirit, has the Spirit himself. And he who has the Spirit of God, is the temple of God, and is thus devoted, consecrated, and marked out as one belonging to the Most High. His spot is the spot of God's people. His light is not darkness. His heart is the home of all that can ennoble human character. As David's first anointing by the command of God gave a sure pledge that he should yet reign over Israel, so the anointing of the Christian by the Holy Ghost infallibly betokens his coming greatness, his everlasting bliss. The graces of God's Spirit in our hearts infallibly assure the people of God that in due time their rest shall be glorious.

The title of believers is found in the righteousness of Christ. The faith of believers surely appropriates the merits of the Redeemer. Faith is the fruit of the Spirit, the gift of God—a gift never bestowed on any who are in the bond of iniquity or in the gall of bitterness.

And he who has living faith, has all the other graces of the Spirit—love, hope, joy, patience, meekness, gentleness, courage, charity, brotherly kindness, and perseverance. In the new birth there are no monstrous productions. Fear without hope, or hope without fear, would present to us a very sad character. Confidence without reverence, or joy without humility, is not the type of a soul born from above.

In this way a beautiful symmetry of character is secured. The people of God are an honor to God. They adorn the doctrines of God their Saviour. They are His witnesses in this wicked world. They are god-like just so far as they are godly. They

know whom they have believed. They are known of God, and men take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus.

In due time, and by God's favor, such prove that the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever. They see that nothing can harm them, because they are followers of that which is good. They know that they are of the truth, and shall assure their hearts before Him.

The admission of such into glory is indeed a great event. Yet they had a right to expect it. Having on the wedding garments, it is right that they should go into the marriage supper. They walked with God on earth, and so they walk with Him in glory.

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY.

The Scriptures as frequently and as urgently call on the righteous to rejoice, as they call on the wicked to weep and mourn. "Let all that put their trust in Thee, rejoice;" "Let Mount Zion rejoice, let Judah be glad;" "Let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice;" "Rejoice evermore;" are mere samples of what may be found in both the Old and the New Testaments.

Nor is the joy of the righteous vain and empty. He has good cause for the very highest exultations in which he ever indulges. Jehovah himself is a never-failing fountain of gladness to the humble. The Psalmist calls God his "exceeding joy." The darkest gulf into which the human mind ever looks, is the gulf of atheism. A world without a sun would be dismal, but a world without a God would be horrible. No wonder that the pious so exult in the Divine existence, and in all the Divine perfections. "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," is a song sung wherever holy creatures are found.

The salvation of God is matter of perpetual gladness to the saints in heaven and on earth. The plan, the Author, the cost, the nature, and the end of redemption, fill the soul with pious wonder, and with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

In like manner the godly have joy in every good thing, in all the common bounties of Providence. They know that everything is sent in love. They even rejoice in tribulation. The martyrs have exultingly washed their hands in the flames that consumed them, and sung the praises of Immanuel till their voices sunk in death.

It does not diminish, but rather increases, and gives permanency to this joy, that it is made sober by *trembling*, that is, by a holy caution, a salutary fear. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is a wholesome caution, and makes no good man despondent. Godly fear is closely allied to pious joy. It was when the prophet had such a glorious vision of God that he trembled, and his lips quivered, and rottenness entered into his bones, and he trembled in himself, that he exultingly exclaimed: "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."—Hab. iii. 16–18. So we see how by fear joy works, and by fear is made perfect. For the saints serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.—Ps. ii. 11.

The Christian has great joy when the kingdom of Heaven is first set up in his own heart. No day is more memorable than the day of one's espousal to Christ. How could it be otherwise? The poor soul, long oppressed by the Devil, having all its noble faculties loaded with the chains of ignorance, guilt, de-

pravity, and misery, and made to serve divers lusts is at that time delivered from its cruel taskmasters, and experiences the glorious liberty of the sons of God. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Oftentimes in its pilgrimage the soul is allowed to have glorious views of the mystery of God and of Christ. If not taken to the Mount of Transfiguration, it at least ascends the mount of ordinances, and there it is satisfied, as with marrow and fatness. Then it is made like the chariots of Aminadib. It holds sweet intercourse with Heaven. Its fellowship is truly with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ.

At the close of his great work on the glory of Christ, John Owen has a chapter on the way and means of the recovery of spiritual decays, and of obtaining fresh springs of grace. He says: "There are two things which those who, after a long profession of the Gospel, are entering into the confines of eternity, do long for and desire. The one is, that all their breaches may be repaired, their decays recovered, their backslidings healed. . . . The other is, that they may have fresh springs of spiritual life, and vigorous actings of all Divine graces, in spiritual-mindedness, holiness, and fruitfulness unto the praise of God, the honor of the Gospel, and the increase of their own peace and joy. These things they value more than all the world, and all that is in it." To such in a very pleasing degree God grants their desire. He has said that He would. Hear Him: "Even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs will I

carry you ; I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”—Isa. xlv. 4. Again He says : “ They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; to show the Lord is upright.”—Ps. xcii. 14, 15. Because God is faithful, He gives increase of peace and joy to His aged servants.

I have met many such in my life-time. I have met some such the last year. They tell me they are just waiting, that they have no tormenting fears, that the joy of the Lord is their strength, and that their hearts are where their treasure is—even in heaven. Blessed are such. Their joys bear them quite above their trials and their sorrows.

A young orchard full of blooms is a goodly sight. But a matured orchard in autumn, laden with the richest fruit, is still more charming. This is the reality ; the other was but the promise. The end of sowing is reaping. The end of a life of piety is comfort and joy in the Holy Ghost.

He who says there is no solid nor abounding joy to the Christian, is a stranger to vital godliness. The joy of the Lord is his strength.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SORROW.

"God had one Son on earth without sin, but never a son on earth without affliction." This has long been regarded as one of the best sayings of Augustine. It is very true and quite coincides with Scripture. It is fully borne out by that saying of the prophet David: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous." Blessed Paul says, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." And sixty years after His ascension to glory, Jesus himself said: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."

All this, when rightly considered, is seen to be fair and fitting. For if the Saviour suffered, it is right the saved should suffer also. It is a great thing to be conformed to Christ in temper or suffering. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him." "We which remain do fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." As Christ's sufferings prepared Him to be the Captain of our salvation and our sympathizing Friend, so our sufferings make us mindful of the sorrows of our Lord and increase our sympathy with Him in all His undertaking for us.

There is a "need be" for all the trials of God's children on earth. Their pangs promote their purity. God puts them into the furnace that He may consume their dross, take away all their sin, and bring them

out as pure gold. "He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." He has no pleasure in seeing His chosen suffer, but He delights to see His image on their hearts perfected. He chastens them for their profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness. He is a wise and good Father, and all His people on earth are more or less wayward. Blessed be His name. He will not cease to chastise them till their wills submit to His and rejoice in tribulation. Thereby the Lord is honored and their salvation promoted.

Future glory will be somewhat in proportion to what Christ's people suffer for Him here. The crown of martyrdom is exceedingly bright. The glorious throng which John saw was made up of those who came out of great tribulation and had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. How sweet will be rest after turmoil, peace after war, a quiet home after a long and perilous journey.

Where is the experienced minister who has not often seen one year of suffering do more for the glory of Christ than five years of service?

N. D. was a small man with an effeminate voice. His tones sounded as if he were not in a good humor. He was not popular. He lived in considerable retirement. He had but little worldly goods, yet no one accused him of closeness. For one in his circumstances he gave liberally. He was a great student of the Word of God. He saw in men much that he could not approve. Nor did he keep silence at such times. He was very punctual in attending the house of God. He maintained family worship with great

regularity. No one saw any flaw in his morals. But he could not express himself well on any subject. His manners were stiff and awkward.

When he had been a professor of religion for about twenty-five years, he became a great sufferer. A complication of diseases came upon him. No such case of bodily disease had ever been seen in his neighborhood. No one saw him sleep for as much as six weeks at a time. He was in constant and excruciating pain. No one could see him without feeling great pain at his bodily distress. He wore away rapidly. He could not walk at all. He could not turn himself in bed. In this sharp trial his piety shined forth with great clearness. Not a murmur escaped his lips. He showed no impatience. His meekness and mildness were very striking. His voice, still effeminate, had quite lost its querulous tone. He was full of thankfulness to God and man. Of the least favor done him he would make some respectful and grateful mention. His whole character seemed to be changed.

Yet he did not profess to be recently converted. On the contrary, he still believed that he had met with a saving change of heart long before. He spoke with delight of many pleasant days he had in youth when alone or when publicly worshipping God. He seemed to remember with accuracy and to quote with appositeness considerable portions of God's Word. He was a wonder unto many. Yea, he was a wonder to himself. He expressed his views as candidly as ever, but with the greatest gentleness and charitableness. His case was much spoken of. Many a Chris-

tian went miles to see him. The feeling of every one seemed to be much like that of the prophet when he saw the bush in the midst of the flame unconsumed, "I will turn aside and see this great sight." And, truly, it was good to see how grace could bear one up, and bear him on, and bear him through, when his body was racked with exquisite tortures.

N. D. lived several years after this season of violent suffering, but he never ceased to be an invalid, nearly helpless, and often full of pain. His faith seemed to grow exceedingly. His end was peace.

This little narrative should teach us—

1. Not to judge of character by mere voice or manners. Some good men have no manners at all. And some very good men have very bad manners.

2. Yet we ought to study to commend to others our religion by those ways which are pleasant, lovely, and of good report. Piety is no foe to the amenities of life.

3. No man knows what he can do and what he can bear till he is tried and receives new supplies of grace. N. D. considered himself a wonder of mercy.

4. Let no man judge his brother. "The weak brother shall be holden up, for God is able to make him stand." He who is most humble is best prepared to stand severe tests.

5. We greatly err when we lightly esteem the least of Christ's disciples, the poorest of the saints. On trial they may quite outshine us.

6. It is certain that neither N. D. nor any other good man who has left this world regrets any sufferings he ever endured on earth. All is well that ends in glory.

7. Amazing is the distinguishing love of God which often takes men who are naturally neither attractive nor amiable, and makes them the monuments of redeeming mercy. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

The following "Song of a Tired Servant" has recently been printed in several journals :

"One more day's work for Jesus,"

One less of life for me !

But heaven is nearer,

And Christ is dearer

Than yesterday, to me.

His love and light

Fill all my soul to-night.

One more day's work for Jesus :

How glorious is my King ;

'Tis joy, not duty,

To speak His beauty ;

My soul mounts on the wing

At the mere thought

How Christ its life hath bought.

One more day's work for Jesus,

Sweet, sweet the work has been,

To tell this story,

To show the glory,

Where Christ's flock enter in.

How did it shine

In this poor heart of mine !

One more day's work for Jesus.

In hope, in faith, in prayer,

His word I've spoken,

His bread I've broken

To souls faint with despair ;

And bade them flee
To Him who hath saved me.

One more day's work for Jesus.

Yes, and a weary day.
But heaven shines clearer,
And rest comes nearer,
At each step of the way.
And Christ is all ;
Before His face I fall.

O blessed work for Jesus ;

O rest at Jesus' feet !
There toil seems pleasure,
My wants are treasure,
And for Him looks sweet.
Lord, if I may,
I'll serve Thee *more* another day.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SORROW—MORE ABOUT IT.

It is not wicked to be sad. Blessed be God for that! Jesus wept. Tears have often been the meat and drink of God's people day and night. As a passion, sorrow is natural to sinful men. It may become sinful, but it is not necessarily sinful. In fact, it is often better, and does more good than gladness itself. Hear the wise man: "Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth." The day of desperate sorrow seems to be reserved to the wicked.—Isa. xvii. 11. To saints, no night is without its morning. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. Blessed is he that has the hope of salvation to cheer him along!

David sometimes complains that his sorrow is daily, and sometimes that it is continual. Grief is often great, and dries up the blood and spirits. Job says: "Mine eye is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow." We ought never to allow our sorrow to become turbulent, leading us to behave like the bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. This seems to have been one of the errors into which the man of Uz once fell.—Job. vi. 8-11. Not unfrequently

sorrow is incurable. When it is felt to be so, we are in danger of sinking into sullenness, or of making our hearts like an adamant, both very dangerous states of mind. A much better way, the right way, is in meekness to bear it, uttering no foolish words against God or man. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him." Let the sorrowful commit their ways to the Lord. "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come," was one of Job's wise sayings.

Stoicism is not a virtue. When God calls us to weeping, we ought to weep. Insensibility is never pleasing to God; but hardness of heart under judgments is very vile. "In that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth; and behold joy and gladness, slaying of oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine."—Isaiah xxii. 12, 13. To despise the chastening of the Lord is to despise the Lord himself.

But sorrow may be excessive. It is right to mourn when God calls us thereto; but it is wicked to faint when we are rebuked of Him. Our moderation should be as clearly known in grief as in joy. God's people may not mourn the death of even great and good men, as those who have no hope, or as the heathen do.—Lev. xix. 28; Deut. xiv. 1; 1 Thess. iv. 13. We should pray that we may not have "overmuch sorrow," "sorrow upon sorrow," or "sorrow without hope," as the Bible uses those phrases.

Nor are we any more at liberty to let our sorrow

become excessive than we are at liberty to indulge mirth to wildness. The tendency of sorrow is to break the spirit.—Prov. xv. 13. But we must encourage ourselves in the Lord our God. When our sorrow works death, it is more or less worldly. Yet who can stand when God dispenses sorrow in anger?—Job xli. 10.

It is only by the Gospel that sorrow and sighing are effectually made to flee away. Only by faith can men in this life enter into rest. Believers, and they only, can be sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.—2 Cor. vi. 10. To such God is indeed a stay and a friend. Hear Him: "I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."—Jeremiah xxxi. 25. By faith He, who was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, becomes our solace and our stay. Oh, consider Him!—Heb. xii. 3; 2 Tim. ii. 11-13.

Our great resort in times of sorrow must be the throne of grace. Is any afflicted? let him pray. David found this the best way.—Ps. cxvi. 3, 4.

Reader, are you tender and pitiful to the children of sorrow? You ought to be. "To him that is afflicted, pity should be showed from his friend."—Job vi. 14. Oh, be tender, and avoid all harshness in dealing with the sorrowful.

THE CHRISTIAN'S HATRED OF ERROR.

Truth is light. It makes manifest. It is one. It is harmonious. No truth contradicts any other truth. Truth has in it no jars, no discords, no contradictions. Like its Author, it is simple, eternal, and immutable. It came from God, who can not lie, can not deceive, can not be mistaken, can not be overreached. As there never was a time when two and two made five, so there shall never be a time when two and two shall make less or more than four. In like manner, sin and holiness never were the same, and to all eternity they shall be different. Right and wrong can not agree, because one is conformity to truth and the other is at war with truth. One is from above; the other is from beneath. Truth is the opposite of fiction, fable, falsehood.

All truth is equally true, but all truth is not equally important. The axioms of geometry are as true as the first principles of the Gospel, yet a man may be happy, holy, and saved without knowing any mathematical truth whatever; but eternal life depends on our knowing God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent. In the arts and sciences a truth may be of great value to one man, while to him whose calling or profession is different, it is of no considerable value. But all religious truth is of great price to every man. On it depends his eternal well-being. We can not

give too much for it. "Buy the truth and sell it not." The wise men of the East took a long journey to see Him who is the way, the truth, and the life; and they gained their object. They went on no fool's errand. It was with a great sum that the chief captain obtained the freedom of a Roman citizen. It was a grant worth having; but it reached not beyond this life. Many who had it not, lived virtuously and piously, and were happy beyond the grave. But he who has the truth is blessed for ever and ever.

No want is so appalling as to be left destitute of God's mercy and truth. All else is bearable. This is intolerable misery. Hezekiah justly thought it would be well with him if peace and truth were in his days. When the Messiah rides prosperously, it is because of truth and meekness and righteousness. When God would pronounce a blessing on philanthropists and benefactors, He says: "Mercy and truth shall be to them that devise good." Nor is there ever a sadder state of things in a community than when truth is fallen in the streets, for then justice standeth afar off and equity can not enter.

On the other hand, a lie is the opposite of truth. It misleads, deceives, and beguiles, just as far as it is received. It is the progeny of the wicked one. When men delight in lies they curse inwardly. The sentence of God is, "He that speaketh lies shall perish." If any doubt God's abhorrence of lies, in the shape of falsehood to men, let them read the awful history of Gehazi; and if any doubt God's abhorrence of lies uttered to Himself, let him read the appalling story of Ananias and Sapphira.

But lies, in the shape of religious error, are no less displeasing to God. False teachers cause the people to err by their lies. By the same means they make the heart of good men sad. They thus afflict whom God would comfort. When men speak lies in hypocrisy, you may know that their conscience is seared with a hot iron. Just as sure as a man loves God's law, he hates and abhors lying. To God nothing is more offensive than false doctrine. It is a slander on the Almighty. It is a deadly poison. It eats like a cancer.

It is wonderful how bitter is the malignity of men against all who are grieved by their false doctrines. "A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it." The basest passions were indulged against all the prophets and apostles and intrepid friends of truth by all the fautors of wicked dogmas.

"No lie is of the truth." That is, no lie is a part of the truth. No false doctrine is any part of Christianity. Pool: "Any part of false doctrine doth so ill match and square with the frame of Divine truth, that judicious Christians may discern they are not of a piece."

Remarks.

1. It is a solemn duty to be valiant for the truth. Men whose profession, office, or station calls them to be so and are not, are justly condemned of the Lord, and are put down among the greatest enemies of God and man.—Jer. ix. 3. Over a people in such a state the bitterest tears may be justly poured out. If they can not be changed, they are utterly undone.

2. God's peace and God's truth go together. We can not have the former without the latter. Holy writers often unite them. Why should we foolishly try to separate them? They are closely united in all good governments, in all happy families, in all virtuous persons.

3. No lie has any sanctifying power. It comes from wickedness. It leads to wickedness. God may save us notwithstanding some errors, but He will not save us by means of our errors. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth."

4. True liberty is by the power of truth in the hands of the Holy Spirit. "The truth shall make you free." All error is licentiousness. It enslaves. It degrades. It debases. It opposes the God of truth and the Spirit of truth.

5. The truth may be held in unrighteousness. Many have done so. It is bad not to know the truth. It is ruinous to know the truth and not obey it. Practice is the very life of piety. "Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice," says Christ. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

THE CHRISTIAN'S GLORIOUS RICHES.

The Christian is a paradox. He is poor, yet makes many rich ; he has nothing, yet possesseth all things. —2 Cor. vi. 10. Because he has Christ, he has the unsearchable riches of Christ. Four times does Paul speak of “the riches of His glory.” It is a Hebrew form of expression, equivalent to “His glorious riches.” In Romans ix. 23, the apostle states it was God’s plan to “make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.” In Eph. i. 18, he prays that “the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.” In Eph. iii. 16, he prays that God “would grant them, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man.” And in Col. i. 27, we read of “the saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” It is therefore clear that all implied in this phrase shall be made manifest in the saints, shall be known by them, shall strengthen them, and shall secure to them the blessings of a glorious experience.

What, then, are these “glorious riches?” Who but God can fully answer that question? Sometimes

He speaks to us concerning them. By one apostle He tells us of "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."—Gal. v. 22, 23. By another He tells us of "faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity."—2 Pet. i. 5-7. What a beautiful constellation of virtues is here! They are the graces of the Holy Spirit. He who has these has glorious riches. Nothing shall ever harm him.

In another place God says, "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours."—1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. Are not these riches of glory? This world and the next, with all the real blessings in both, belong to the people of the Most High. This is very much the way in which Christ personally stated the matter: "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."—Luke xviii. 29, 30. In like manner, Paul says that godliness has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."—1 Tim. iv. 8.

We may, then, sum up these riches of glory thus: Believers have full and free forgiveness of all their sins; they are fully accepted in the Beloved; they are clothed in Christ's spotless righteousness; they are adopted into the family of God; their title to heaven through Christ is perfect; they are regenerated; they have increase of grace; their sanctification

is secured ; they have peace in believing ; they are sure of victory over sins, the world, the flesh, the devil, all sorrow, death, hell, and the grave ; they have the elements and principles of all virtues, and shall infallibly have them all perfected ; they have God for their Father, Christ for their Saviour, the Holy Ghost for their Comforter, hope in God for their anchor, and heaven for their home ; they shall have boldness in the day of judgment ; they shall be like Christ and with Christ forever ; they shall inherit all things.

Oh, who would not be a Christian ?

SOME MUSINGS OF AN OLD CHRISTIAN.

Long-continued and sore trials would drown the people of God in sorrow, but that the Lord gives them blessed cordials and puts underneath them the everlasting arms. Sad indeed is the case of a man when Divine mercy can not effect its object without his overthrow. God never withdrew His tender mercies from any till sin had made its dreadful mark.

As God is the Father of the fatherless, so is He also the Helper of the helpless.

He who so fears as not to love, and he who so loves as not to fear his Maker, are alike destitute of true piety.

He who trusts in great men is as foolish as he who trusts in mean men.

God's condescension is equal to His majesty.

Man's knowledge is soon exhausted. Even Dr. Johnson told the king he had written nearly all he knew.

Inanimate creation and brutes glorify God. Why should man expect to be left to do as he pleased, and honor or dishonor God, as he might choose?

Our circumstances are never so depressed that the Almighty can not give us effectual aid.

The worst maladies are sinful passions.

Neither men nor angels are ever better employed than in obeying God's commandments.

It is sad that so many boast of justification or cry for pardon, who never speak of sanctification nor pray for purity.

Having learned to sing God's praises here, we shall not lose the heavenly art by passing over Jordan.

No man thinks his debt of gratitude to God greater than it is.

"Every creature is to us what God makes it to be—a friend or an enemy."

Let all who have unusual prosperity remember that their condition has temptations not a whit less severe than those of abject wretchedness.

The early Christians, who had been converted from heathenism, often write almost as if they had just escaped from the precincts of perdition.

Those who have honestly and heartily accepted the righteousness of Christ will be sure to mark His footsteps and walk as He walked.

All the sufferings and perplexities of man can be fairly traced to his apostasy from his Maker.

Through the wonders of Divine grace, the natural evils which befall good men are the means not only of checking, but also of eradicating, the evils of their hearts and preparing them for glory.

Even in this life the pious are often able, by the sure Word of God, to see glory revealed in the future of this world, much more in eternity.

The heart of Christ and the heart of His people agree on all vital matters.

If the Lord sufficiently helps His people along under trials, He shows Himself as kind as in granting deliverance.

As the whole scheme of salvation had its origin in Jehovah's mercy, goodness, and loving-kindness, and as He changes not, so we may rest assured He will perfect all the work He has begun.

The most glorious thing in salvation is the perfect consistency of its rich grace with inflexible justice.

There are wonders enough in the constitution of the person of the Mediator, and in His amazing history while on earth, to fill the wisest and best of men with adoring admiration till they are admitted within the veil to behold the King in His glory.

God is so determined on having our warm affections enlisted in all our approaches to Him, that if this point be not gained, nothing will please Him.

Nothing is more necessary than the help of God's Spirit. Without wind, sails will not carry a vessel onward. Without fire from heaven, Elijah's sacrifice would have been no better than that offered to Baal. Without the spirit the body is dead.

It would be a mystery amounting to a contradiction, if the salvation of God produced no controlling, delightful emotions in the souls of His true children.

The *nine* lepers who returned not to give glory to God, were as well pleased with their cure as their companion, the *tenth*; but they cared nothing for the author of so great a mercy.

It is sad to see teachers flattering their pupils, and pastors their people; but all that would be harmless if men did not flatter themselves and refuse to receive evidence against themselves.

LETTER TO AN AGED CHRISTIAN.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I hope you are full of comfort and peace. Truly the Lord is good to you as He is to us all.

When a man is prepared to leave the world, it is a happiness to be able to say of him : “ His death was early, not premature.” Sometimes one outlives all his descendants and is left alone in the world. The poet describes one such :

“ Sad was the sight of widowed, childless age
Weeping. I saw it once. Wrinkled with time,
And hoary with the dust of years, an old
And worthy man came to his humble roof,
Tottering and slow, and on the threshold stood.
No foot, no voice was heard within ; none came
To meet him, where he oft had met a wife,
And sons, and daughters, glad at his return ;
None came to meet him ; for that day had seen
The old man lay, within the narrow house,
The last of all his family ; and now
He stood in solitude, in solitude
Wide as the world ; for all, that made to him
Society, had fled beyond its bounds.
Wherever strayed his aimless eye, there lay
The wreck of some fond hope that touched his soul
With bitter thoughts, and told him all was past.
His lonely cot was silent, and he looked
As if he could not enter : on his staff
Bending he leaned, and from his weary eye,

Distressing sight ! a single tear-drop wept :
None followed, for the fount of tears was dry ;
Alone, and last it fell from wrinkle down
To wrinkle, till it lost itself, drunk by
The withered cheek, on which again no smile
Should come, or drop of tenderness be seen."

Such has been the lot of many. Such may yet be your lot or mine. But to this hour God has spared us such trials.

I hope you love prayer more and more. That is the life of piety. We all need larger measures of the influences of God's Spirit, and these can be had for the asking. There is a peculiar fitness in the aged servants of the Lord giving much time to calling upon the Lord.

As you can not go among the people as freely as you have done, I fear that you may think you can not be as useful as formerly. But this is not so. If you can set an example of cheerfulness, tenderness, and confidence in God, you will not be living in vain. And nothing can excuse you from prayer. Nothing more befits your age or your infirmities.

Many years ago Dr. Archibald Alexander wrote : "It is not in vain for you to live, while you have access to a throne of grace. Before the advent of Christ there were some aged persons who seemed to have been preserved in life that they might pray for this event, and that they might enjoy the pleasure of seeing the answer of their prayers, and embracing Him in their arms whom they had so often embraced by faith. While all around was spiritual drouth and desolation, and corruption and error had infected all classes from

the priesthood downward, there was a little band who had taken up their residence in the temple, or often frequented this holy place, who were waiting for the consolation of Israel. Two of these are named Simeon and Anna, but there were others of the same character; for we read that this very aged and pious widow, who departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day, ‘spoke of Christ after she had seen Him, *to all them who looked for redemption in Israel.*’ The darker the times the more closely do the truly pious adhere to each other. This little knot of praying people knew each other, and no doubt spoke often one to another, and in this case the Lord hearkened and heard; for the object of their desires and prayers was given to them. Was the life of Anna an unprofitable life, although she never left the temple and did nothing but fast and pray? Was Simeon a useless member of the Church, because he was probably too old for labor? The truth was—and the same is often verified—that the true Church of God was at this time confined to a few precious souls; while the priests and the scribes and the rulers had neither part nor lot in the matter. As God preserved Simeon, according to a promise made to him, until he saw the Lord’s Christ, so He may be lengthening out your life, my aged brother, until you may have the opportunity of seeing the salvation of Israel come out of Zion. Do you not wish to be a witness of the rise and glory of the Church? Pray, then, incessantly for the growth and prosperity of Jerusalem. Consider it as your chief business to pray that the kingdom of God may come.”

If you and other aged Christians in your region would unite in prayer, as by God's grace you might, there would ere long be such a revival of religion among you as you have never witnessed. And here let me ask you to make up your mind what you will do yourself. Then ask others around you to join you in supplication every day. Then as you love to write, send a letter to your aged friends in different places, and ask them to join you. These letters need not be long, but they should be kind and urgent. Who knows what a blessing might follow such a concert of the aged?

I never knew a man who regretted the time he had spent in prayer. Did you? But we have both known dying people to regret that they had prayed so little.

It has for years been common in some parts of the country for respectable aged persons to give concerts of sacred music, singing the tunes most in use in their early days. This was a lawful way of spending an evening. But a concert of secret prayer, maintained by the aged men and women of your region, would bring down blessings that would fill heaven and earth with new hallelujahs to the Lamb.

If you ask how may you and others pray *fervently*, I answer, all true devotion comes from the Holy Spirit. Yet it has grown into a saying in Israel, *to pray frequently, is to pray fervently*. It is also useful to think of the worth of souls, of the shortness of the time left us to pray, and of the infinite fullness that is in Jesus Christ.

I suppose our prayers are more apt to fail in importunity than in anything else. Oh, that we could fol-

low, as we ought, the teachings of Christ on this very point. He spoke two parables to inculcate importunity. He set us an example also to the same effect. In importunity there can be no excess. "The further one proceeds, the greater will the goodness of the Most High appear to him. The more he trusts to it, the more will it uphold him. Importunity in prayer is a pressing into the goodness of God. . . . The highest honor we can pay to God is to honor Him with our confidence."

If you desire express warrant of Scripture for calling upon God, it is found in scores of places. I will cite but a few. "Thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of Me, O Israel. Put Me in remembrance."—Isa. xliii. 22, 26. "I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none."—Ezek. xxii. 30. "He wondered that there was no intercessor."—Isa. lix. 16. Surely God would not thus complain of men, if He did not intend to find fault with them for "restraining prayer before God."—Job xv. 4. Of some He says that all their miseries begot no spirit of prayer: "They have not cried unto Me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds."—Hos. vii. 14.

Indeed there are passages of Scripture which seem to have special reference to the very wants of the churches in our day. "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive

their sin, and will heal their land.”—2 Chron. vii. 14. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, it shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord.”—Zech. viii. 20, 22. The world is to be converted by prayer. Although God’s purposes of love and mercy are great, yet that should not hinder, but awaken prayer. The rule of His administration still is and ever will be till time shall end: “For this will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” Is He not most gracious when He says, “Command ye Me?”—Isa. xlv. 11.

That we may not doubt His readiness to hear us when we pray for the advancement of religion, our Lord Jesus Christ, in giving us a model of ordinary prayer, has made three out of seven petitions (and those the first three) to relate to this very thing: “Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. vi. 9, 10.

But I will not weary you. Pray on. With your last breath pray for Zion, and for perishing sinners. And be of good cheer. Your salvation is nearer than when you believed. The day breaketh.

DEATH OF AN OLD DISCIPLE.

On the 15th of August, 1861, I visited a gentleman who was that day one hundred years old. His name was Robert Kennedy. On the day of my visit I wrote these things concerning him. He was born August 15, 1761, in the parish of Carmichael in Ayrshire, Scotland. He was the first child baptized by the Rev. John Ramsey, the minister of that parish. He married pretty early in life, but has been a widower more than *thirty* years. He has been the father of *seven* children, of whom two daughters only survive. He was never married but once. He has had *thirty-seven* grandchildren, and *thirty-seven* great-grandchildren. Most of these survive.

When young, Mr. Kennedy became connected with an anti-burgher church in Scotland, and continued in it till he was *thirty-seven* years old. But *sixty-three* years ago he joined the Independent Church at Paisley, then under the pastoral care of Rev. Alexander Morrison and Rev. James McGavin. In that church he became a deacon, and held that office till he removed to America, about *thirty-four* years ago.

Mr. Kennedy has enjoyed almost uninterrupted health. Twice in his life his nervous energy has threatened to fail, and he has seemed inclined to melancholy. But these attacks did not last long. He has been through life, and still is, very methodical.

He takes very regular and suitable exercise. About six weeks ago he lost his last surviving son-in-law. Between these two there was a strong attachment, and it was feared the death of his son-in-law might affect his spirits. But he seemed able at once to resign him into the hands of God.

Mr. Kennedy, so far as known by any of his family, has always been very kind in his temper, and has of course been very free from all malignant feelings and passions.

His habits of devotion are well established. He reads the Scriptures constantly, and when the print is good he has no need of spectacles. The first thing he does in the morning is to read God's Word. On the Lord's day he reads nothing but the Bible. He still commits to memory a chapter in the Bible every day. He also spends much time in prayer during the night, when he supposes all around him are asleep. Then he prays audibly.

He has never been known to allow a poor person to leave his dwelling without food, or the offer of it. Nor does he ever allow anything refuse to be offered them, nor anything which he would not be willing to use himself.

Through life he has made it a rule not to introduce disagreeable topics of conversation, and to discourage others from doing it, unless it was really necessary. Of course gossip and tattle have never found favor in his sight.

He was asked in my presence if he had any advice to give to his descendants on this his birthday. Pointing to a Bible, which had just been presented to him

by an affectionate granddaughter, he said : " That book gives better advice than I can. All I could say is chaff."

He was asked : " What do you think of the Lord Jesus Christ ? " He said : " He is the true God manifest in the flesh," and immediately quoted 1 Tim. iii. 16.

He still often leads in family prayer, and to the edification of all who unite with him.

Very often in the night, when he supposes no one hears him, he is heard saying : " Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Though his vision is good, his hearing is very far from being perfect.

Many will recognize in this sketch the ancestor of many respectable people in this country, and the great-grandfather of the children (on the mother's side) of Rev. N. West, D.D.

Mr. Kennedy lived till he was nearly one hundred and seven years old. He died in Allegheny City, Pa., on the 16th of March, 1868. He retained the comfortable use of all his faculties to the close of his life. He was remarkable for the simplicity and godly sincerity of his character. The Lord was with him to the end. He sleeps in Jesus. And if he sleep, he doeth well.

A GREAT AND GOOD MAN.

The Rev. Thomas Smyth, D.D., of Charleston, S. C., is no more among the dying, but among the living. He has gone to his Father and his God. He has left behind him friends, who, like him, have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Dr. Smyth was born in Belfast, Ireland, June 14, 1808. Like many other distinguished men he felt through life a great indebtedness to maternal love. After his mother's death he wrote: "Most blessed mother, could my thanks now reach thee in thy bright throne above, I should here, amid these falling tears, pour forth the grateful acknowledgments of thy long-cherished son. I love to think of thee, my mother, of thy illimitable, inexhaustible love."

At the age of twenty-two he came to America, a graduate of Belfast College and an open and earnest professor of Christ's religion. He was received into the Presbyterian church at Paterson, N. J., in 1830. He studied at Princeton but one year, and in November, 1831, accepted an invitation to the Second Presbyterian church in Charleston, S. C. Here he spent his public life in toils and labors so abundant, so various, so useful, and so astonishing as to be a wonder to many.

Not a few of Dr. Smyth's years were spent in the

midst of pain and infirmity, which would have effectually laid aside from labor almost any other man. One stroke of enervating and paralytic disease followed another until locomotion was difficult or impossible, and until he was dumb with silence. But his amazing will determined to make the dumb to speak and the lame to walk, and he did it. When at last able to say to his tongue, "Awake, my glory," it was with a joy as exultant and as grateful as perhaps any one has ever exercised.

Of the life, character, and labors of this excellent man, we have a charming account in a discourse preached by his admiring and eloquent successor, Rev. G. R. Brackett. It covers sixty-three well-filled octavo pages. No son could have written more lovingly. No orator could have uttered more exact truth. This discourse has been very properly published at the request of the congregation. It will live and be read with interest scores of years to come. Its production was without doubt a labor of love.

Dr. Smyth's domestic and social relations were through life of the happiest kind. No man probably put a more just estimate upon such blessings. It was a great privilege to see him in the bosom of his large and lovely family.

Dr. Smyth's views of the ministry closely agreed with those of Luther: "A preacher must be both a warrior and a shepherd." If David must fight with a lion and a bear or lose one of his lambs, then with a lion and a bear David will fight, and God will give the victory. But if the wild beasts will let him and

his flock alone, he will carry the lambs in his bosom, and gently lead his burdened ewes to green pastures and beside the still waters.

I feel very sure the reader will thank me for giving two paragraphs of Dr. Smyth's fine writing quoted in the discourse above referred to. The first is his description of pain: "I have often thought I could write a natural history of pain. I have known her from childhood. We have walked arm in arm, dwelt in the same house, been occupants of the same bed. She is, like the chameleon, of every hue, and, like Proteus, of every shape. She is sometimes as quick as light, and again like an Alexandrian line, 'drags her slow length along.' Sometimes she is as the forked lightning, coursing in tortuous torture through every limb and fibre of the body, and dissolving the pent-up and collected clouds of bitterness into flooding tears; and sometimes she is that lightning in its negative form of quiet, dull monotony, or occasional playful flashes, just enough to rouse the attention and excite the fancy. Sometimes she languishes into the faint tones of an infant talking in its sleep, or like the bubbling groan of some strong swimmer in his agony, or like a strong man in the whirlwind of passion, she puts on an angel's might, and mystery of power."

The other paragraph displays a lovely humility and a sweet submission to God's will: "I am sensible of my entire weakness, dependence, and unworthiness. I have desired to take my place and position as God assigns it, neither taking the direction, nor refusing to follow; neither avoiding humiliation

nor exaltation; having a profound sense of my own nothingness, and of my ill-desert, of any -- the lowest seat among the great, wise, and good, and yet believing I can be and do all things God requires of me, through His wisdom guiding, and His grace strengthening. I have endeavored to distrust myself without distrusting God, and have endured many rebuffs, many hard blows, many contemptuous remarks and actions. I have been scorched, peeled, and annihilated; filled with shame and self-loathing, and would gladly, a thousand times, have sunk into the earth, or fallen as a star of night, into darkness and nothingness. I have prayed God to disappoint all my desires, blast all my schemes, and throw contempt on all my pride, so far as is necessary to my sanctification and usefulness. I have endeavored to walk humbly and softly, and to receive as well-deserved the chastisement of the Lord. If a course of discouraging circumstances and adverse prospects be designed expressly for my chastisement, may I not hope that it was meant in mercy? Raise and fix, Almighty Spirit, my fainting, wavering heart, to a true resignation, the only atmosphere of peace. Oh, penetrate with deeper, holier, happier views of things eternal, as imminent and near at hand, as swiftly approaching and inconceivably glorious. Then, oh my God, let earthly hopes be darkness, earthly joys expire, intervening sadness, as well as final sickness and death with all their pains, lie before me, I will adore Thee with a grateful heart, and pray never more to complain, but chide my every regret, and suppress all my repinings."

Sleep on, thou blessed soldier of the Cross, till
Christ shall raise thee up in glory with a body fashioned like unto His glorious body.

ANOTHER GREAT AND GOOD MAN.

The late Dr. Thomas De Witt was a wonderful man. He had a long line of illustrious ancestors, both in this country and in Holland. This fact furnished no fuel for vanity, nor excuse for indolence. He felt from childhood that a man is not to be judged by the deeds of his forefathers. So studious was he, that even at the academy the boys called him Sir Isaac Newton. At the age of sixteen he graduated with high honor. At the theological seminary he made a deep impression of his powers and principles.

In his domestic relations Dr. De Witt was most happy. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." Good children are an inheritance of great value. All the members of that family lived for the honor of the Redeemer in the usefulness of him who was their honored head. Oh, how they delighted to see him serving God in the Gospel of His Son.

Dr. De Witt's life was not without great and sharp trials. Of his eight children, six had passed over the river that has no bridge before their parents. Some of these were taken very suddenly. One died when an ocean lay between him and his parents. But in all these trials Dr. De Witt murmured not, nor charged God foolishly. He loved to sing of *mercies*, even when bowing down under great afflictions. God was glorified in his sorrows as well as in his joys.

Dr. De Witt was an excellent preacher. His pulpit was his throne. There he wielded the sceptre of truth and love over the hearts of an admiring people. His mode of preparing was chiefly mental or by short sketches. This suited him best. His was a free spirit. It luxuriated in discursive thought and speech. Yet he well repaid any attention given him. He never served God or the people of his charge with that which cost him nothing. He read a good deal, but he thought more. One of his colleagues well describes his preaching thus: "His audience heard a piece of close dialectics; or a fine play of imagination; or a chapter of genuine religious experience; or a glowing appeal to the heart—all delivered with such an *abandon* of manner, as showed the utter absorption of the speaker in his theme." This reminds one of Bates speaking of Richard Baxter's "noble negligence of style."

Dr. De Witt was very industrious, yet always seemed at leisure. He was never in a hurry, yet he was far from being dilatory. "No one who sought his advice, or asked his kindness, ever heard from his lips the reply, '*I have no time.*'" His promptness in meeting all engagements was most exemplary.

The last great public act of his life was the dedication of the Reformed church at the corner of Forty-eighth Street and Fifth Avenue. When he concluded, a friendly spectator unconsciously said: "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace." He was then eighty years of age, and had been preaching the Gospel sixty years.

In October, 1873, Mrs. De Witt departed this life.

This was a great trial to all concerned, but to the aged, widowed husband the stroke was fearful, though borne in much patience, his strong faith giving glory to God. When her coffin was lowered to its resting-place, his struggling emotions gave vent to themselves in these words: "Farewell, my beloved, honored, faithful wife. The tie that united us is severed. Thou art with Jesus in glory, and He is with me by His grace. I shall soon be with you. Farewell."

Dr. De Witt had a very refined delicacy that made all feel at ease in his presence, and yet made all love to serve him. To one who greatly loved him, shortly before his death, he said: "Do you think you will be able to take care of me a little longer?" Thus, by natural, gentle, winning ways, he knit all hearts to him.

What was the secret of the formation of this great character? Perhaps twenty answers may be given, and all of them contain some truth. One says, 'The elements of his moral greatness were humility and truth.' That is so. No great character was ever formed in pride or falsehood. One who has long and intimately known him says that, although Dr. De Witt was a great talker, he never heard from him a word of twaddle, a sentence of idle gossip, nor an undignified remark on any subject.

All great characters are remarkable for faith—for demanding evidence, and when it is given, for receiving it. This was remarkably the case with the great Socrates, though a poor heathen. It was strikingly true of Sir Matthew Hale. It was as true of Dr. De Witt. His faith was of the operation of God, and

so had a strength which no mere natural principle of credence could possess. Love, too, was present with her sweet influences. Who can ever forget the thrilling power with which in 1825 he quoted these lines from Milton? It was at the formation of the American Tract Society:

“But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive,
In offices of love, how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe.”

Dr. Adams began his address at the funeral with the words, “Dear Dr. De Witt,” and it found an echo in a thousand breasts.

Dr. James W. Alexander once said of him: “Taken all in all, no living man has a more desirable or deservedly high standing in the Church of God than Dr. Thomas De Witt.”

The reader will pardon the author for paying this tribute to the memory of a life-long friend who always said, as David, that Divine gentleness had made him great.

WHAT CAN I DO.

“What can I do?” asked M., adding, “I am a poor, feeble, erring creature. I know nothing aright till I am taught of God. I find my strength to be perfect weakness. My wisdom is folly. I make many mistakes. When I would do good, evil is present with me.”

Now, dear M., let me say a few plain things for your guidance and encouragement. It is true that, if you are left to yourself, you are as weak as water. But God’s plan is to make the feeble like David, and the house of David as the angel of God. Think as little of yourself as the truth will allow, and yet say, “Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” Look away from yourself. You have, no doubt, often trusted in yourself in a foolish and sinful way, forgetting that “even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” We can not be too much emptied of self; we can not too confidently trust in the Lord.

A just sense of your weakness, therefore, so far from being a disqualification for usefulness, is really a preparation for it. “When I am weak, then am I strong,” is true of the people of God in all their ways and duties.

Let me advise you never to put yourself in a state either of indifference or of hostility to any good work or plan. It is impossible for every man to give effective aid in every enterprise. But let him not discourage or hinder others who can push it forward.

Be careful, too, lest while you are doing nothing good, you are doing something wrong. Some good people do a world of mischief. They display such carnal affections, are so much like men of the world, practice so little prudence, so often allow their good to be evil spoken of, and manifest such want of tenderness of conscience, that they give great occasion to the enemy to speak reproachfully.

If you would be useful on a large scale, take these hints :

1. Whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might. Pursue no good thing with languor. Feeble exertions court opposition and create embarrassments.

2. Believe assuredly that God can and will bestow a blessing on right plans rightly conducted. Be not faithless. Take God at His word. It is never relied on in vain.

3. Be patient and not fretful and restless. The husbandman hath long patience and waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth. Many a scheme can not be executed in a day or a month. If a man would raise a forest of oaks, he must not expect to see his desires fully accomplished in even one long life-time. Let us sow seed. Let us plant acorns.

4. Do not try to control Providence, but find out and conform yourself to its plans. Men may some-

times dream of making water run up stream. But they never really succeed. "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate."

5. Be not easily discouraged. Hope on. Hope ever. A very experienced laborer says that he has frequently seen the happiest results flowing from labors performed under the greatest discouragements. Many have said as much. Look not much at discouragements.

6. Pray much. "To pray frequently is to pray fervently." Pitch your tent hard by the mercy-seat. Pray without ceasing. Never be at ease in Zion. "The voice that rolls the stars along spake all the promises." Plead them before God. Adopt the language of one of old: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

7. Enlist, so far as you can, the prayers and co-operation of others, especially of humble good people. Waiting on the great for help and patronage is very tedious and discouraging. Hardly anything is more so. People of good sense and ardent piety, in the middle walks of life, are commonly the best coadjutors.

8. Having done your best, cast yourself and your endeavors wholly on God's great mercy in Christ Jesus. Seek to have yourself and your labors washed in atoning blood. Freely admit that you are nothing, that you deserve nothing, and that all you dare to hope to be and to obtain, is wholly through God's sovereign grace. Be humble.

POSTHUMOUS USEFULNESS.

Dr. Doddridge has a chapter showing that we ought to glorify God in our death. And reason would show that we should try so to live as to be useful even after death. The Scriptures say of Abel : "He, being dead, yet speaketh." This was said of a man nearly *four thousand* years after his time. This should encourage us to zeal in our Master's service. Such cases are not rare, nor are they confined to olden times.

There never was a time when the examples and principles of such patriots as Hampden, Sidney, La Fayette, and Washington were more potent for good than the last fifty years. In a single year two lives of Washington have recently been published—one in English and one in French. The deeds, and even the features, of the heroes of modern freedom are familiar in the halls of the monarchs of Asia. Every year the domain of sound principles of freedom is widening. The lustre of the example of the true friends of our race is gradually obscuring the imperial splendor of all the absolutism of earth.

On moral and religious subjects the influence of the dead is felt even more than on questions of politics. Who can tell the power wielded since his death, as well as before, by the pen of Dr. Archibald Alexander? A single institution has, up to December, 1874,

sent out thirteen tracts written by him, in quantities varying from 2,000 to 53,000 copies each—in all 235,250 copies of his tracts, or 6,476,000 pages of these excellent little treatises. The same institution (Presbyterian Board of Publication) has issued eleven of his books—in all 171,900 copies, or 52,978,900 pages of such works as the “Way of Salvation,” “Religious Experience,” etc.; 50,000 copies of his “Evidences of Christianity” have gone forth to bless the world; also nearly 40,000 copies of his “Religious Experience.”

Another publishing institution (the American Tract Society) has sent out eleven of his tracts in numbers varying from 16,000 to 506,000 copies—in all 1,816,000 copies, and of pages 16,536,000. It has also issued three of his books, and 32,500 copies, or 5,428,500 pages, have been sent forth by the Tract Society.

And this work of printing the works of this precise and practical writer is but just begun. The demand seems to be increasing rather than diminishing. Neither man nor angel can tell the power of this one writer for good. He being dead, yet speaketh.

Such things invest life with the deepest solemnity. “Whatsoever man soweth, that shall he also reap.” He shall reap many fold. Both good and evil have a vast power of multiplying. The late pious Dr. Porter, of Andover, Mass., wrote a sermon, afterward published as a tract, entitled “Great Effects from Little Causes.” In that he has traced out at some length the effect of the pious labors of the mother of Philip Doddridge in teaching her little son. The time will come when the least successful labor of love

shall be invested with more importance and more glory than Dr. Porter has been able to throw around the scrap of history here referred to.

Nor shall God ever cease to own His people and their pious labors. Their prayers, examples, sayings, and writings exert an influence long after they bid farewell to earth. However long ago genuine supplications and intercessions for the cause of Christ may have been offered, they are still sweet odors before God. Many have suggested that Saul of Tarsus was probably converted and saved in answer to the last prayer of the first martyr, Stephen. There is as sweet a savor in the prayer of the psalmist, "O send out Thy light and Thy truth," as in the day it was first offered. And a good life, how does God delight in it. He never forgets it. In His book of remembrance it is all delineated, even down to the giving of a cup of cold water. So a good song, or saying, or book may be blessed long after its pious author has slept the sleep of death. Their virtue ever depended on the truth they taught, and the spirit they breathed, and not at all on the natural life of him who wrote them. Blessed be God for all the bright hopes which His people are warranted to cherish for usefulness in this world after death, as well as for the glory, honor and immortality in the world that is to come.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 789 337 3

